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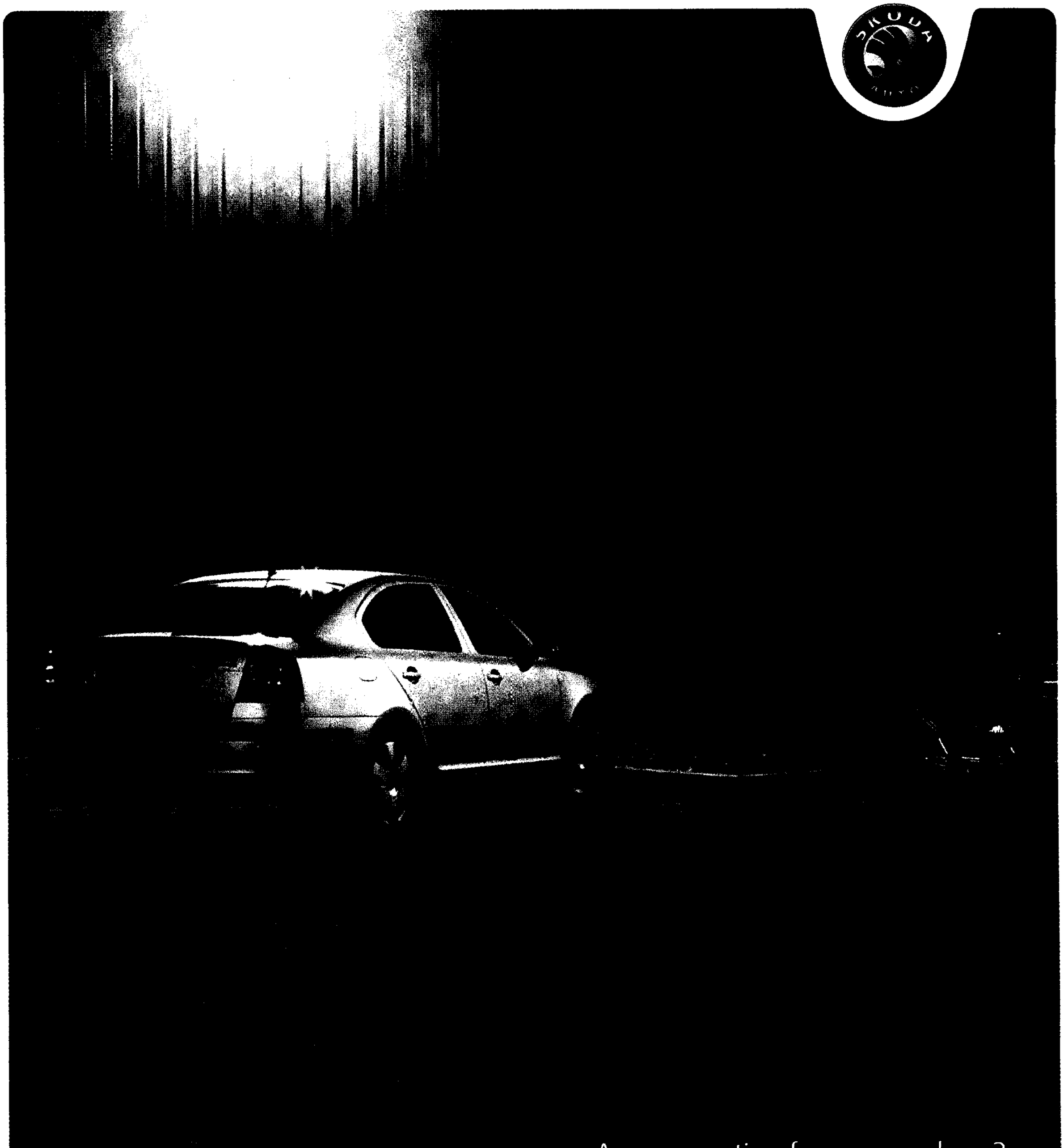

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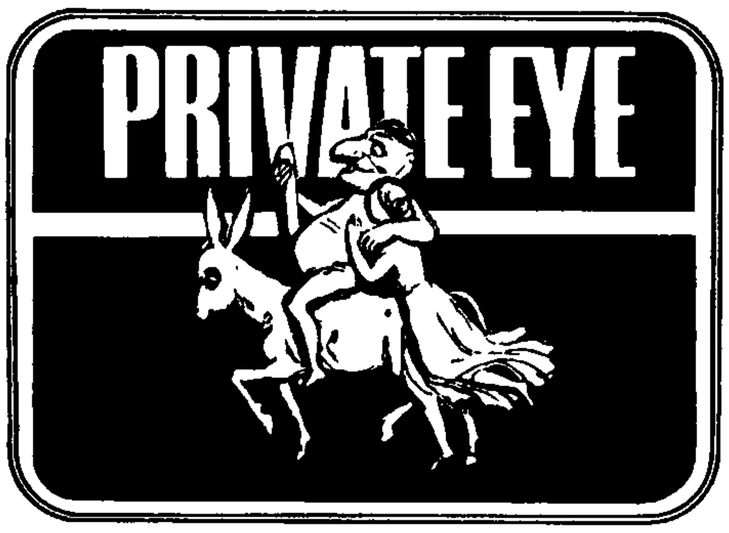

Fabulous at 50!

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IT'S not just more time with his family that former health secretary Alan Milburn will be giving up in his new bespoke cabinet job. He will also forfeit the £30,000 a year he was earning as adviser to venture capital group, Bridgepoint.

Bridgepoint owns Alliance Medical, which last month (three months after it signed Milburn up) won a £95m, five-year contract to provide 12 mobile MRI scanners to ease NHS waiting lists.

An easier and cheaper option for health minister John Hutton, who happens to be Milburn's best buddy, might have been to provide the funds to run the NHS's own MRI scanners, which often lie idle because of a lack of money or staff.

At Bristol's Frenchay Hospital, for example, two scanners are unused because of a shortage of radiologists. Instead patients have been scanned by mobile units from Alliance Medical and Frenchay doctors aren't happy: not just because of the waste, but because they aren't themselves allowed to analyse the scans which are sent to Belgium for examination.

A new £700,000 MRI scanner arrived at the Royal Bolton Hospital in January. But as Bolton South East MP Brian Iddon told the *Eye*: "It only runs six half days a week because the trust say they cannot afford the staff." Mr Iddon said this is a scandal, even though he does not criticise the Alliance Medical contract.

A BBC survey has found that seven out of 19 hospitals given scanners from lottery funds are also under using them because of money and staff shortages. But with Milburn in charge of election policy and his successor as health secretary, John Reid, looking to award even more private scanning contracts, this is the shape of things to come in the NHS.

"New market entrants will play an important role not only in providing additional new capacity, but also by acting as catalysts for innovation," says Reid. In fact more privatisation will only make the NHS even more reliant on firms like Alliance – which is all in keeping with "new" Labour's view of "NHS plc" as it is now called following publication of Professor Allyson Pollock's new book on the erosion of the health service ideal.

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ABC

Number crunching

15 months
Time necessary to spend out of government to experience your children growing up

10 months
Time necessary to spend out of government for failing to register financial dealings and lying on a mortgage application

8 months
Time necessary to spend out of government after declaring yourself not good enough at running a department

FORMER spin doctor turned sports columnist Alastair Campbell is keen to become a Labour MP – a useful base for the great man to get on with making money elsewhere no doubt, while leaving the great unwashed, his potential constituents, to sort out their own problems.

Should Tony Blair win the next election handsomely, Campbell might reasonably hope to succeed Tessa Jowell as minister for culture, sport and media. But should the Big Beastie in Number 11 take over, he'll be lucky to make secretary of state for paper clips.

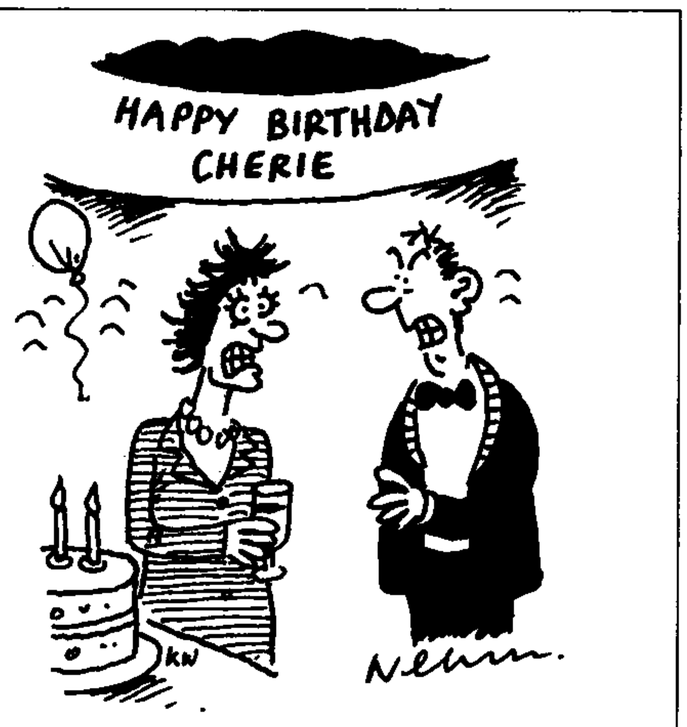
Fortunately Ali won't have to hunt too far or too long for a seat: an ultra-safe one, Stoke-on-Trent South, has still not found a candidate, even though sitting MP George Stevenson announced back in March that he would not be standing again. Under Labour party rules, the constituency might have expected to have had to choose from an "all wimmin" shortlist. But not in this case. So Ali sits, parachute at the ready, while the town's former MP and failed mayoral candidate must surely expect some degree of gratitude from Number 10 for keeping schtum. Arise Lord Stevenson of Stoke?

AS THOUSANDS of children return to school this month, pupils at Haverstock School in Camden will be putting their feet up at home. The private finance contractor building their new school hasn't finished yet.

Kajima Europe, a subsidiary of Japan's biggest construction company, was due to hand over the keys for the start of term and school bosses say they had been assured throughout the summer that the programme was on target. But the new £21m building will not be ready for pupils until 4 October.

Meanwhile, only the year seven (first year) students will have a full timetable in one of the few buildings which remain standing. Pupils in years eight to 11, including both GCSE years, will be given one and a half hour tutorials each morning at the local community sports centre and homework to help them make a start on the year's curriculum. In a letter to parents, headteacher John Dowd wrote: "In addition we will provide every student with textbooks, folder and paper, pen, pencil, colour pencils and a sturdy school bag." So that's all right then.

Kajima blames the wet weather in August for the delay, as well as problems with sub-contractors failing to meet deadlines. As reported in *Eye* 1077, Camden council approved the private finance initiative (PFI) deal in April last year, just as Los Angeles district attorney Steve Cooley was describing a Kajima school-building project in California as "a public works disaster of biblical proportions." Cooley's verdict followed his investigation into the $250m Belmont Learning Center – a school built on an earthquake fault and a shallow oil field. Work had to stop when it emerged that the land was also dangerously toxic, leaving the state to pick up the bill.



"Don't make a speech – we can't afford you"

"NEW" Labour high command has told the handful of local Labour parties who have yet to select a general election candidate to get a move on and do it by the end the month.

Could the Dear Leader be preparing to announce a snap autumn election on the back of a miserable Tory result in the Hartlepool by-election, which fortuitously will be announced during the Labour conference in Brighton?

THE battle between news and showbiz for the front page of the *Daily Mirror* claimed another casualty in the week of the Beslan school siege, when a 3am "exclusive" look at Robbie Williams' new video shared the splash with the threats of the Russian hostage takers.

The result of the juxtaposed headlines cannot have pleased the family friendly popstar's PR representatives: "Robbie Gets Evil – 150 Child Hostages: We'll Kill Them All".

NEXT ISSUE

Includes special PAUL FOOT tribute supplement.
Edited by Richard Ingrams

Street Of Shame

THERE is horror in Wapping but jubilation in Westminster at the news that Eben Black, former chief political correspondent of the *Sunday Times*, is suing for unfair dismissal. He was forced out earlier this year for the heinous crime of not being sycophantic enough to his boss, political editor David "Crackers" Cracknell, probably the most despised man in the parliamentary lobby.

As the *Eye* pointed out at the time, Black joins a long and distinguished line of hacks who have fallen victim to Crackers. When he was at the *Business*, his number two was repeatedly accused of "disloyalty" and eventually departed. At the *Sunday Telegraph*, Crackers himself had to leave in a hurry after being caught stealing the contacts list of political editor Joe Murphy.

At the *Sunday Times*, Cracknell would lean on news supremo Mark Skipworth not to run Eben Black's stories. He was then able to tell his deputy that "if you want to get your stories in the paper, you must let me put my name on them and pretend they're mine".

Cracknell's overweening vanity led to a major bust-up only last month with his colleagues Robert Winnett and David Leppard, who had got hold of documents written by cabinet secretary Sir Andrew Turnbull about, er, leaks of Whitehall documents to the *Sunday Times*. What distressed Crackers was the discovery that there was no mention of him in these papers. So he wrote a piece claiming that in a recent talk to the cabinet about leaks, intelligence coordinator Sir David Omand had singled out "the leak of 26 documents to David Cracknell, the political editor of the *Sunday Times*, in 15 months".

When Leppard refused to incorporate this into his front-page splash, Cracknell threw a huge temper tantrum and threatened not to write anything else for that week's paper. Instead of calling his bluff, executives feebly caved in and inserted his boastful addendum into the piece.

Even so, it can't be denied that Crackers has sometimes been the recipient of documents from someone in Whitehall. The precise mechanism by which he obtains these leaks, and keeps his source happy, may be the subject of much fascinating evidence in Eben Black's forthcoming lawsuit.

***DAILY Express* night editor Ted Young saw nothing very newsworthy in the death of ageing rocker Carl Wayne, formerly of the Move. "You'd have to be a seriously old cunt to remember that guy," he told newsroom colleagues.**

Alas! The deceased, known for hits such as "Blackberry Way" and "Flowers in the Rain", turned out to be a chum of ageing wannabe rock-drummer Richard "Dirty" Desmond, who happened to be in the newsroom at the time. The remark brought a rapid reaction from the Dirty Drummer, who promptly put his tub-thumping skills to good use by decking his night editor.

Wheezing and winded from a blow to the chest, Mr Young recovered sufficiently to put on his jacket and inform his purple-faced assailant that he would be hearing from his lawyers.

Sadly for Dirty Des, his minder Paul Ashford returned from holiday just a day too late to hold him back from this latest embarrassing loss of self-control. And it could have even more embarrassing consequences. According to paragraph 14 of the Express Newspapers "company policies and procedures", any employee who assaults a colleague is "liable to summary dismissal for gross misconduct". No doubt Desmond Decker – as he is now inevitably known – will be sacking himself without delay.

THE *Sun*'s recently-promoted Dominic Mohan was not slow to make his mark in his new role last week. He will bring as much talent and flair to the job of associate editor as he did when he was simply the World's Worst Columnist.

Mohan's first act as fourth-in-charge at the paper was to set up an "Eeyore the Jury" line inviting readers to nominate whether they would prefer England goalkeeper David James or a donkey to take to the pitch for the Poland game, a joke which was laboriously stretched over two days with the aid of some badly mocked-up photos, a pair of cut-out donkey ears and some of Mohan's characteristic crap song-lyric jokes ("who ate all the carrots" and "ear we go" being particular highlights).

So unamused was the England squad that the players retaliated by refusing to speak to any journalists either before or after their 2-1 victory. The *Sun* sports desk, which had opposed the stunt from the start, had to indulge in some serious *arslikhan* in a desperate attempt to get back into the team's good books, and Mohan is now even more unpopular in the office than he was before.

SO. Farewell then Alan Nixon. The hack who made the multi-million pound football transfer market his beat has now resigned from the *Independent*.

As the *Eye* has pointed out over the last three years, Nixon was never shy about using his byline to promote players and managers represented by Paul Stretford's Proactive Sports agency and to fuel speculation about their market value, despite being a friend of Stretford and a shareholder in his company, now part of the Formation Group.

Matters came to a head when Nixon was found to be up to his old tricks again in a series of articles for the *Indie* at the end of July, during the saga of Wayne Rooney's move from Everton, in which he speculated that Manchester United would have to come up with "a hefty fee".

Sure enough, Manchester United eventually came through with the "hefty fee". When details of the deal were released, it emerged that Formation had creamed off a cool £1.5m and that wasn't even taking into account its cut of Rooney's earnings.

The *Indie*'s new sports editor Matt Tench didn't know about the hack's shareholding. When it was drawn to his attention by an irate Everton fan, he told Nixon to desist from reporting on Formation clients. Nixon decided to "sever his links" with the *Indie* rather than accept this limitation.

Given that his byline continues to appear in both the *People* and the *Mirror*, it seems executives on those papers haven't imposed any such restriction. Yet one might expect the management of the Mirror group, in particular, to be concerned by this potential conflict of interest. After all, it was only five years ago that two of its City hacks were fired and editor Piers Morgan severely reprimanded after the share-ramping scandal.

THE news that 200 of the 140,000 staff from the department for work and pensions had been disciplined for looking at pornographic websites on their work computers enraged the *Sun*, which splashed the "huge net filth scandal" all over its front page in late August.

Alongside demands for the government to "sack the pervs", the paper printed a large picture of glamour model Jordan opening her shirt to expose her 32FF breasts – although as it turned out, this was merely illustrating a perfectly wholesome news story that she had, er, opened her shirt to expose her 32FF breasts in order to publicise "new virtual racing show *The Horses* on Sky Vegas Live", which coincidentally happens to be owned by Rupert Murdoch, the *Sun*'s proprietor.

Two weeks later, when work and pensions secretary Andrew Smith mysteriously resigned from the cabinet, most papers put his departure down to the endless in-fighting between Blair and Brown. The *Sun*, however, knew better. "The Porn Minister… Smith resigned 12 days after the *Sun* told how staff had called up two million pages of internet filth." Once again as a public service, the paper offered an illustration of the sort of depraved images they might have been looking at – a "page threesome" in which three topless ladies were pictured "getting along swimmingly as they splash in a pool". For readers at the DWP, the paper offered a helpful link: further pictures of the "stunners" were online at the *Sun*'s own page3.com.

"A GENERATION betrayed" shrieked the *Daily Mail* on 9 September. "Our society has knowingly, carelessly, unashamedly sexualised our teenagers to the point where sex with a 12-year-old does not even merit a custodial sentence…

"We see very young girls covered in make-up with hardly any clothes on and we blame the fashion industry. We see the same young girls acting provocatively, and we blame the teen magazines and television shows that glorify ever younger celebrities."

But *where* do we see them? Well, for one place in the *Daily Mail,* which the following day carried the heart-warming story of Rosie Huntington-Whitely, the "new Kate Moss" who was "discovered" at the age of 15. "Top American designer Nicole Miller said 'Rosie is fabulous, very young and has huge potential," simpered the paper approvingly." Just in case readers were in any doubt as to the fabulousness of the AS-level student (and "distant relative of Queen Victoria"), the paper helpfully printed pictures of her at ages four, ten and twelve – and on the catwalk, proudly posing in a strapless dress which barely concealed her underwear.

ON 31 AUGUST the *Indescribablyboring* carried a reader's letter from Mrs Valerie Morgan, of Benfleet, Essex, which began: "Following what seems to have been a very successful Olympic Games, might it not be an idea to hold the Olympics in Athens every four years? Athens is clearly the spiritual home of the Games and provided a superb venue…"

By an extraordinary coincidence, the following morning the *Irish Independent*, published in Dublin, printed a letter from a Mr Alan Kenny of Blackrock, County Dublin, which began: "Following what seems to have been a very successful Olympic Games, might it not be an idea to hold the Olympics in Athens every four years…" and went on word-for-word the same as Mrs Morgan's letter.

Although the *Indie* and the *Indo* as the Irish paper is known in Dublin, are separate newspapers, they are both owned by "Sir" Tony O'Relli's Independent Newspapers group. Mrs Morgan is a real person who has never heard of Mr Kenny; he, spookily, does not appear to exist. Is some sort of telepathy at work here?

NEWS QUIZ
1. a quiz answer; 2. a quiz answer; 3. a quiz answer; 4. a quiz answer a quiz answer a quiz answer; 5. a quiz answer a quiz answer

The Times

THE *Guardian*'s finance pages were in both high-minded and contrite mood when commenting on the downfall of personal finance spiv David Aaron.

The day after the financial services authority (FSA) described Aaron's business as "one of the most serious cases of mis-selling" that it had investigated and banned his company from trading, its City editorial condemned those hacks who had accepted fees from Aaron to act as "independent" experts promoting his investment portfolio.

Fortunately, it smugly noted, "no *Guardian* journalist is among those implicated by the FSA". For the record, the guilty hacks were Lawrence Gosling, former editor of *Investors' Week* and now editorial director of *Bloomberg Money*, and *Money Marketing* contributor Julian Gibbs.

On the other hand, the *Grauniad* was obliged to acknowledge that it "did accept a fee from Mr Aaron to sponsor two investment guides in 2000 that we published. The *Guardian* retained complete editorial control, and it was felt at the time that an independent financial adviser as sponsor was more acceptable than a product provider. It was a matter of judgement whom we picked as sponsor, and with hindsight it was ill-advised to select Mr Aaron. For that we apologise."

But this is not the full story of the paper's relationship with Aaron. Only last year, its Jobs & Money section turned to him as a bond market expert to write a series of articles recommending investments. The phone number of the David Aaron Partnership was helpfully included for anyone who fancied parting with their money to this shark. Six months later the partnership had gone into liquidation under the weight of a £1.8m compensation bill.

DAVID Beckham has admitted for the first time that he feared for Victoria as her wait plummeted.

News of the World

HACKS at the *Observer* were greatly amused to learn from the *Telegraph* that they are apparently "angry at the treatment of long-serving executive editor and news chief Andy Malone", who has not been seen at Farringdon Road since storming out of the office threatening resignation more than a fortnight ago.

Since Malone's greatest achievements included threatening to spike a story by his political correspondent on the grounds that it was "a bit political" and demanding that more female journalists be recruited to up the "beaver count" in the office, as one hack put it: "All we are feeling is a wave of intense relief. There is absolutely no one here who is not over the moon about him going."

No one? Not quite. Foreign editor Tracy McVeigh, a close colleague of Malone's for a number of years, apparently spent much of the day after his departure "weeping and moaning" in the office – no doubt she was missing his help on the story they had been working on together the previous day, which necessitated them both missing an important editorial meeting and which prompted the row in the first place.

Meanwhile political editor Kamal Ahmed is confidently telling colleagues that he is the new news editor. This came as some surprise to hacks who have already been told that the post will be advertised – although most agree that Ahmed does need something new to do, his knack for finding political stories having almost entirely abandoned him since his one and only source, Alastair Campbell, left Downing Street.

HACKS on the *Evening Standard* Londoner's Diary have been on their best behaviour since the arrival of a new young recruit last week.

HACKWATCH

A Liddle Goes A Long Way

INCREDIBLE though it may seem, only two months have passed since an astounded world learned that jobbing freelance hack Rod Liddle had left his wife for a 22-year-old secretary from the *Spectator*. Several slightly more famous characters – Sven-Goran Eriksson, David Blunkett, Wayne Rooney – were caught with their pants down during the silly season, yet none has had the staying power of the Liddles, mainly because husband and wife are so eager to go public at every opportunity. It's a game of consequences: tousled Rod Liddle meets gorgeous pouting Alicia Munckton and ditches feisty Rachel Royce:

He says... In a book-plugging interview with the *Daily Telegraph* on 10 July, Rod confirms that he has run off with Alicia. "She looks like Keira Knightley," he drools, adding that the parting with Rachel was "amicable".

She says... "Hurt, devastated and betrayed", Rachel writes a 2,700-word feature for the *Daily Mail* about Rod's affair with "the Slapper". We learn that she has ordered ten sacks of manure to be delivered to their office at the *Spectator*.

He says... According to the *Daily Mail*, Rod accosts Rachel in the village pub after reading her article. "How could you wash our dirty linen in public?" he yells.

She says... "Twice I found a packet of Viagra in his pocket with some tablets missing," Rachel writes in the *Mail*. "Rod said it was research for his new book which is about middle-aged men and adultery, but do you need to research something like that twice?" She derides Alicia as a "muppet".

He says... "The central point," Rod informs the *Mail*, "is that I'm not proud of it and I'm going to shut the fuck up."

She says... On 15 July, Rachel starts a "divorce diary" for the *Daily Mail*. "My auntie eyed the picture of Alicia in the *Mail on Sunday* and made a typically loyal but untrue remark: 'Well, she's nowt to look at. She looks like her legs are on upside down.' My sister quipped: 'There's no hope if you've got fat legs at 22'."

He says... Having promised to shut the fuck up, Rod duly writes a 1,400-word column in the *Times* about his affair with "a very pretty, blonde, 22-year-old woman called Alicia". After listing some of his wife's failings – not taking out the rubbish, storing her tampons in the biscuit tin – he congratulates her on "an unexpected and, I'm sure, long overdue career opportunity. I await with burning anticipation my wife's tie-in single, promotional video and range of clothing." He maintains his dignified silence by writing a *Spectator* diary about his mistress, revealing that some newspapers "have asked Alicia to do a photograph without any clothes on".

She says... In another instalment of her divorce diary, Rachel reveals that Rod "gave me £500 to spend in Harrods on Valentine's Day and then spent the evening with Alicia".

He says... Rod rings his wife and threatens her with an injunction. According to Rachel, he tells her that "I may have the morals of a sewer rat but you're worse than me for writing about it." What really riles him, apparently, is her disclosure about the Viagra.

She says... In long pieces for both the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Mail*, Rachel introduces her sexy new boyfriend, Piers Gibbon, 38. "He's old enough to have led an interesting life," she sighs, "but he's young enough to still have a great body – none of the middle-aged paunch – and plenty of stamina..." He is, she adds, "good in the saddle".

He says... In the *Spectator*, Rod expresses delight that Faria Alam's affairs with Sven-Goran Eriksson and Mark Palios have hogged the headlines, since "my own sexual transgressions got pushed off the news pages for a while". He grumbles that "my estranged wife trousered a whole heap of dosh – although nothing in Faria's league, I suspect – for spilling the beans... Nothing can assuage the strange sense of self-righteousness of the wronged woman."

She says... "Rod and I didn't get up to much between the sheets," Rachel tells *Mail* readers. "But on the first night with my new lover I hardly got any sleep at all. I'd forgotten how exciting making love could be. What a contrast. Only yesterday I discovered Rod had been sent more Viagra in the post."

He says... In the *Sunday Times*, Rod claims that "my estranged – very, very estranged – ex-wife" has been less than honest in presenting herself as a wronged woman. "She too partook of transgressive sexual intercourse six days after we were married. With a man called Piers, for God's sake".

She says... "There are lies, damned lies and then there's my husband." Rachel insists in the *Mail* that she and Piers went to bed only after "Rod had been having an affair with Alicia for five months". She retaliates by "hitting him where it hurts most – by talking about his continued deliveries of Viagra. Have I yet mentioned that he threatened to call the police when I told him I wouldn't hand over last week's delivery?"

The world says... "Why are we wasting our time on this 'scandal'?" wonders the *Independent*'s Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, before devoting an entire 1,200-word column to the "profound questions" it raises. "Each time we witness such public marital betrayals," she explains, "a little more faith and trust washes away from society... and the blood of love itself thins out." Other Glendas – Sue Carroll, Deborah Orr, Carole Malone, Amanda Platell – excitedly debate whether Rod is sexy or not. In the *Express*, Judy Finnegan describes the Liddles' marital warfare as "a tremendous treat" which has "greatly entertained" her.

And the consequences are... Pots of money for Rod and Rachel, of course. But during their profitable slanging match there's been barely a mention of the fact that they have two sons, aged six and four. "It's Rachel Royce's and Rod Liddle's kids I feel sorry for," a *Sunday Times* reader observes in a letter to the editor (5 September). "To have one sad, whingeing parent is bad enough, but to have two is unlucky in the extreme." These may very well be the only sane words uttered throughout the epic saga.

Their office conversations now consist largely of rapturous tributes to the talent and sagacity of the paper's editor, Veronica Wadley.

What has provoked this magnificent display of loyalty? Might it be related to the fact that their new colleague, Sophie Bower, is Wadley's daughter?

AS A MAN of legendary probity, *New Statesman* owner Geoffrey Robinson will surely be appalled to learn that his staff are embroidering the truth to lure unsuspecting advertisers.

"We are a weekly publication," advertising manager Claire Henderson wrote to one prospective American client last month, "with a circulation of 37,500." Er, not quite. Not even near, actually: the latest figure for the *NS* from the Audit Bureau of Circulation is 24,000.

JUST how profitable was Alan Milburn's decision to spend more time with his family in the past year? Very, to judge by the fact that he has recently bought a £400,000 riverside bachelor pad in London, no doubt helped by his earnings as an adviser to Bridgepoint Capital Ltd (see *Eyes passim*).

By happy coincidence, another apartment in the same block belongs to Sian Jarvis, the former TV-am presenter who was hired as chief press officer for the department of health when he was secretary of state. Since Jarvis was reported to be "distraught" when he resigned from the government last year, she must be delighted to find that he is now a close neighbour.

DOWNING Street adviser and former Peter Mandelson helper Patrick Diamond failed to make the shortlist for the Hartlepool Labour nomination as party bigwigs felt his metropolitan links and lack of experience might put off the voters. One local councillor even described him as "wet behind the ears".

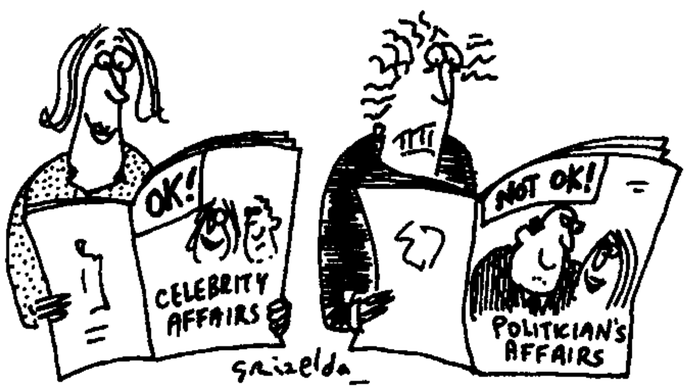
But Diamond may still harbour designs on the seat, especially if local candidate Ian Wright falls victim to a Liberal Democrat surge later this month. As he told the *Journal* newspaper: "I have decided that I would not be seeking the selection – on this occasion."

BARELY 18 months after being reselected unopposed to fight the next election, West Lancashire Labour MP Colin Pickthall has announced that he is "standing down because I will be 60 soon".

An anguished letter to local newspapers from formerly loyal local comrades soon followed. "Why didn't anyone ask us what we thought – he [Pickthall] will be 60 soon but 60th birthdays don't come as surprises so what is the truth? Then we hear tales of women visiting councillors and talking to them about the nomination. We thought that wasn't allowed. Finally for what it's worth we think that an all-women shortlist would be received badly in the local press who have attacked the possible selection of a 'lickspitle' [sic]. We are sorry that this is anonymous, but you may recall that the last time a group of ordinary members in West Lancashire spoke out they were all expelled. We don't want to be expelled, just have a voice. Signed; Loyal but angry Labour Party members."

READING East MP Jane Griffiths, who was replaced as "new" Labour candidate for the town in a bitter selection battle in February (during which former lobbyist turned local councillor Tony Page was victorious), is already being air-brushed from Labour literature.

The usual listing of Ms Griffiths' Commons and constituency contact details have been banished from ward newsletters. Instead, local electors are being referred to, er, Tony Page!



ROMFORD Tory hopeful James "Tufty" Brokenshire will doubtless be delighted to read a letter in the local *Romford Recorder* praising his tireless work on behalf of the "Adamsgate Action Group" from one Graham Williamson, its "campaign manager".

However, Brokenshire may be less happy to learn that the same Graham Williamson who has taken the helm of the local community group once stood as a candidate for the National Front; and when that organisation went into meltdown, he teamed up with the infamous Patrick Harrington to form the crypto-fascist "Third Way".

IF PROOF were ever needed that Tony Blair passionately shares Margaret Thatcher's free-market ideology, it is that since "new" Labour came to power in 1997, it has given no less than £34m of taxpayers' money to the Adam Smith Institute.

This is the right-wing think-tank that wants to scrap the NHS, reduce state provision in education and the criminal justice system and sell off as much of the public sector as possible. It even claims to have invented the word "privatisation".

Earlier this year there were uncomfortable rumblings when it emerged that the institute's international consulting arm, Adam Smith International (ASI), had received nearly £8m in the past year for "aid work", mostly from Hilary Benn's department for international development (DfID). But the *Eye* has learnt that this was but a small part of the total the institute's international branch has received to export its aggressive brand of free-market capitalism around the world.

Of the £34m total, £28m has been handed over from DfID in the last four years to fund a series of ASI projects, many in the poorest and most politically sensitive areas in the world. These include 23 in Iraq, Afghanistan, the West Bank, Gaza and across Africa. To ensure its free enterprise message is banged home, ASI even won £300,000 to train DfID staff in Britain as well as abroad.

GREAT news for polluters from the department for the environment, food and rural affairs (DEFRA): a waste-trading scheme designed to discourage landfill will result in massive cash windfalls for areas using polluting incinerators.

The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) puts a limit on how much waste a council can put into landfill each year; but it allows them to buy another council's leftover allowance. Those councils which send all or most of their rubbish to incinerators rather than landfill will be able to flog their allowance for up to £200 a tonne – which will be the level of the fine for landfilling over the limit.

Local authorities were sent their provisional allowances in August to prepare for the beginning of LATS next spring (or from October in Wales). Some areas, such as Birmingham or the combined north London waste authority, will have more than 100,000 tonnes of spare allowance to sell.

However, in Hull, which is trying to launch a recycling scheme but mainly uses landfill at present, there is a 10,000 tonne shortfall between how much waste there is likely to be and the authority's landfill allowance. Under threat of a £2m fine in 2006 (and larger fines every year thereafter) city bosses are considering other schemes, including a new incinerator. They won't be the only ones looking at that option.

Not only do incinerators produce dust, smoke and ashes containing toxic dioxins, they also discourage environmentally-sound local recycling and waste-reduction schemes because the waste companies demand a certain amount of rubbish to burn in order to keep running the incinerator.

Council aims to monitor proliferation of erections

Whitstable Times

CORPORATE LABOUR

WITH only days to go before Labour's business love-in (formerly the party conference) in Brighton, the Blairite Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) publishes a helpful timetable of fringe meetings where ministers will sing for their supper on corporate-funded platforms.

On the first Sunday **health secretary John Reid** will speak about "Public Health and Personal Responsibility" at an event funded by **Chiron Vaccines**. Labour-watchers will recall the outcry when Powderject, the company of Lord Smallpox, aka Paul Drayson, was awarded a multi-million vaccine contract after his donation to the party. Drayson sold Powderject to Chiron, and the US corporation clearly knows whose palm must be greased.

As well as the vaccines contract, Chiron also gets a DTI-backed £20m "development grant" from the North West Development Agency. Ageing pop star Joe Jackson, now a spokesman for pro-smoking group FOREST, and Richard Smith, lobbyist for United Health, one of Labour's favourite US health firms, will join Reid at the event.

Home secretary David Blunkett will appear at two IPPR events. He will address an "Identity, Diversity and Citizenship" meeting alongside Trevor Phillips, boss of the Commission for Racial Equality, and **culture minister Tessa Jowell**. The meeting is sponsored by **Siemens Business Services**, a German firm which can smell the money to be earned from home office contracts for policing citizenship. Identity cards offer huge potential business for a firm like Siemens, which has already made millions from two citizenship contracts: running the "casework" system for the immigration department; and the passport office contract. (While Siemens was earning its millions, asylum-seekers' files were left to rot in basements and the firm got a huge cash bail out after its initial passport work went out of control.)

Blunkett will also be "in conversation" with government-friendly *Guardian* hack David Aaronovitch at a meeting paid for by **Reliance Secure Task Management**. Will Aaronovitch ask Blunkett why his privatisation programme is giving Reliance more contracts to hold and transport prisoners while the firm is going from scandal to scandal?

The latest occured in Scotland when Reliance accidentally released seven prisoners it was supposed to hold, including a convicted murderer.

And during an investigation into Reliance by the *Sun*, a reporter joined the firm only to be told by a Reliance trainer that they had a "headbanger" game for dealing with prisoners they were transporting and disliked. Sudden breaking at speed caused the inmates to "smack their heads" in the portable cells.

Tough on crime!

Warballs

● "Touring caravans went through a stable market for a decade but over the past three years they have increased by 25 per cent… Since 11 September, the world has changed. Caravans offer safe holiday accommodation and allow you to pick your moment." — **Marketing director of Swift Caravans, *Financial Times*.**

● "The album includes vocal fantasias that lean toward chamber music, with many Björks looped and echoing, alongside songs that are obviously but distantly connected to hip-hop. There are also glimpses of Bulgarian women's choirs, the hooting polyphony of central African pgymies and the primal vocalisms of Meredith Monk… Björk, who has lately been living in New York City, has said that *Medulla* is in part her response to the events of 11 September." — ***New York Times*.**

THE NEO-CONMEN

1. Dick Cheney

FOR MONTHS now allegations of impropriety and corruption in Iraq and elsewhere have hounded Halliburton, the oil and services company once run by US vice-president Dick Cheney. But it is a scandal in Nigeria that could cause George Bush's deputy most anxiety in the run-up to November's elections.

A construction consortium led by a subsidiary of Halliburton and Technip, a French company, is accused of paying "commissions" and other sweeteners of at least $180m to help win massive contracts between 1995 and 2004 to build a $10bn liquefied natural gas plant in the notoriously corrupt oil-rich west African state.

The company denies wrongdoing and insists nothing untoward happened during Cheney's two-year tenure at Halliburton in the late 1990s. But the vice-president's fate may now lie with an obscure north London lawyer called Jeffrey Tesler, whose company, Tristar, has been paid $176m to act as consultant to Halliburton and its partners since 1995.

Tesler's lawyers deny their client operated what in effect was a slush-fund to smooth the path of the deal. But more may become clear later this month when Tesler has his second interview in Paris with judge Renaud van Ruymbeke, who's leading the French investigation into the mega-corruption surrounding the construction deal.

Tesler, a specialist in conveyancing law, says he was paid such generous fees for his expertise on Nigerian politics and his influence with local lobby groups. This is remarkable as he has visited Nigeria just once (on a date he can't recall though he says it may have been in the mid-1980s).

He did, however, enjoy extremely close relations with senior officials in Halliburton's wholly-owned subsidiary, Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR): so close that, Tesler says, he parcelled out some of his near-$180m in consultancy fees to one Albert Jack Stanley, president and chief executive of KBR, and to a senior KBR consultant, William Chaudan.

According to transcripts of his interview with Van Ruymbeke, Tesler eventually revealed that Mr Stanley was the ultimate beneficiary of an account in the name of "Amal". He also admitted paying Mr Chaudan via an account in Jersey. Tesler said he paid Chaudan because "he introduced me to more than 20 potential sub-contractors" for the project – a curious arrangement, meaning that Chaudan was being paid by Tesler for identifying potential subcontractors, when it was Chaudan's consortium that was paying such a large sum to Tesler to help, er, identify potential subcontractors.

Senior managers at Halliburton, and indeed the US vice-president, were horrified that their company's good name might be tarnished by sleazy operators on the margins of their biggest construction contract in Africa. As word spread of Tesler's friendship with Stanley and Chaudan, the company's managers swung into action sending emails to all staff distancing themselves from the men, who were immediately barred from Halliburton headquarters.

Although Stanley retired last December as KBR president, his contribution to the company had then been regarded as so valuable that he had been kept on as a senior consultant with his own luxury office at Halliburton. But in June Stanley and Chaudan were deemed by Halliburton to have violated the company's "code of business contact". Stanley is also due to be interviewed in France this month.

Awkwardly, Stanley's appointment as president of KBR in 1998 was ratified by Cheney and his then number two, David Lesar, who has headed the company since Cheney returned to active politics. More awkwardly still, the French investigation notes that one of the payments to Tesler – $37.5m – was agreed on 18 March 1999, just 12 days after TSKJ, Halliburton and Technip's consortium with Italy's Snamprogetti and the Japanese Gas Corporation signed up for another $1.4bn of work on the Nigerian project – and after

"Can't you read, Mr Clinton?"

Halliburton had bought Kellogg.

Technip had also pushed hard to block Tesler's reappointment as the consortium's agent, but was eventually persuaded otherwise by Halliburton. In a 2003 memo, Chaudan says Tesler's Tri-Star "was engaged on the recommendation of Kellogg, despite strong opposition from Technip… Tesler had professional and personal ties with Kellogg".

Halliburton now says the payments to Tesler were corrupt and it will seek to recover its share of his fees. But that doesn't absolve Cheney of legal responsibility if Halliburton failed to comply with the US foreign corrupt practices act which governs American companies' operations overseas.

2. Richard Perle

THESE are sweaty times for Conrad Black's chums and ex-colleagues from the Hollinger International board, who can save their own skins only by betraying their benefactor. Feeling the heat more than anyone is Richard "Prince of Darkness" Perle, the neo-con who has driven the Bush administration's hawkish stance in the Middle East.

Perle is the board member singled out in a company report prepared by Richard Breeden, former chairman of the US securities and exchange commission (SEC). "With the notable exception of Perle, none of Hollinger's non-Black group directors derived any financial or other improper personal benefit from their service on Hollinger's board," Breeden writes. "It is, of course, possible for a conflicted board member to act at least somewhat responsibly. As a conflicted executive committee member, however, Perle did not. Rather, his executive committee performance falls squarely into the 'head-in-the-sand' behaviour that breaches a director's duty of good faith and renders him liable for damages… It is difficult to imagine a more flagrant abdication of duty than a director rubber-stamping transactions that directly benefit a controlling shareholder without any thought, comprehension or analysis."

In 1998 Perle told the *Washington Post*: "I'm very high on Conrad. He's got a good practical sense, a scholar's scope and comprehension and not inconsiderable personal charms."

Now, it seems, he has had something of a change of heart. Last week he reacted to the report with an attack on his former hero and patron: "The special committee has concluded that Lord Black and other members of the Ravelston Management Group misled the directors of Hollinger, including me, concerning the scope of their compensation, the payment of noncompete payments and the related-party nature of several transactions."

Perle claims that "I did not participate in or profit in any way from the management agreements, related-party transactions or noncompete payments at issue." What is not in dispute, however, is that Black drew up a bonus plan that earned Perle over $5m at a time when Perle was on the executive board which approved huge payments to Black and his associates. Nor is it in dispute that Hollinger Digital, the company's venture capital arm, made a $2.5m payment to defence specialists Trireme Partners. At the time the payment was authorised, as we reported in *Eye* 1094, Perle was a director of Hollinger Digital and managing partner of Trireme.

DOWN ON THE FARM

FOR SOME years dismay has been mounting over the thousands of dead dolphins and porpoises regularly washed up around Britain's south-western coastline. No one doubts who is responsible for the slaughter: the fishermen, mainly French, who have been exploiting the ever-rising demand for sea-bass using a technique known as "pair trawling".

Two trawlers tug between them a giant net, up to a mile wide, which efficiently scoops up the bass. But it is also set at an ideal depth to snare huge quantities of dolphins and porpoises. These are then chucked overboard to pollute the beaches of Devon and Cornwall.

So great has been the outrage prompted by this ecological disaster that as long ago as 2000, our then fisheries minister Elliott Morley pledged on *Newsnight* that Defra had now got sufficient evidence "to take action, and we intend to do that". There was just one little problem. Although the dolphin-massacre was taking place in UK waters, under the terms of the common fisheries policy Mr Morley no longer had the power to take that action. He needed first to convince his masters in Brussels.

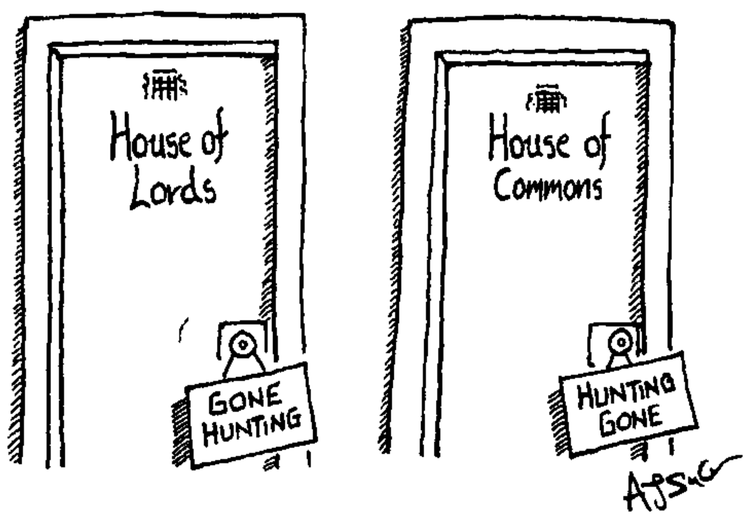
Whitehall was not confident that it would get that permission unless it came up with a solution which might enable the French (plus a few Danish and Scottish boats) to continue their lucrative bass fishery. So Defra came up with the idea of fitting the trawls with an "escape hatch", allowing the dolphins to wriggle free. Last winter it carried out trials of its brilliant wheeze, using two pairs of Scottish trawlers, only to find that within a short time it had caught 169 dolphins which somehow hadn't been able to find Defra's escape panel.

This finally convinced Defra it had no alternative but to beg Brussels to impose a ban. In July our current fisheries minister, little Ben Bradshaw, announced that he was going to "press the EU commission to implement an emergency closure of the winter bass fishery off the west country coast". This was hailed by the *Western Morning News*, which had been campaigning on the issue, as "a major victory". A local conservation group, Brixham Seawatch, likewise lauded Bradshaw's move as "a victory for everyone who cares about these beautiful creatures".

This month Brussels gave its answer. Fisheries commissioner Franz Fischler, in one of his last acts before retiring back to Austria, ruled that the UK government had not presented sufficient evidence to justify an end to pair-trawling. He did not of course mention that the first response to Bradshaw's plea had been a stiff note from the French government stating that a ban on bass-fishing off the coasts of south-west England would be wholly unacceptable.

Mr Fischler himself had previously let it be known that he was "sympathetic to the plight of the dolphins". But when it came to the harsh political realities which govern EU fishing policy, even he was powerless. As a commission official explained: "The UK government had not provided the evidence of imminent extinction needed to justify emergency action." In other words, so long as one marine mammal is left alive – the "Single European Dolphin" – Brussels refuses to act. The slaughter must continue and visitors to the coves and beaches of Cornwall must learn to live with the stinking consequences.

'Muckspreader'



ETV

Beslan siege coverage (All Channels)

THE wording which television calls a health warning – advising viewers that they may not like the words or images they're about to get – has shifted subtly over the decades. Twenty years ago, malign impact was taken as a fact: the following programme contained "strong language" or "distressing images."

More recently, the disclaimer phrases have acknowledged that, since the rise of routine expletives in youth-speak and the popularity of Quentin Tarantino movies, the audience can't be regarded as uniform. Offensiveness became an option: "Some viewers *may* find the following words/pictures offensive."

Last week, though, this doubt about national sensitivity was dropped. News programmes screening extracts from the video footage discovered in the Beslan school prefaced their selection with the simple declaration that the images were upsetting or explicit.

This change was fair enough. Whereas one man's swear-word is another's gritty contemporary dialogue and a scene which some find abhorrent as pornography is powerful erotic drama to others, any fully paid-up human being would become distressed by shots of children and their carers being held in terror. The only people who could watch the footage with any equanimity or pleasure would be the terrorist paymasters for whom the video was presumably filmed as a souvenir of the outrage.

So, given that no one in their right mind would want to see it, the question arises of whether British broadcasters were correct to screen the pictures. Though television is often accused of sensationalism and recklessness, this is not one of the occasions that such a charge applies. The debate is a complex one.

The first argument in favour of transmission is the fundamental justification of most journalism: elucidation. The reasoning here runs that reticence prevents revelation of the full horror of a situation. This logic is most often applied to war reporting: screening-out of dead bodies and the results of weaponry can make conflict seem easier and cleaner than it is, making subsequent wars easier to launch.

This analysis, however, is harder to apply to Beslan. While it may be true that most of us struggle to imagine exactly what it would be like to be a Baghdad citizen under cruise missile attack or an Iraqi soldier on a battlefield, we can envisage all too well the reality of children and adults being held hostage in a school by suicide-bombers.

The same would have applied if a video camera had survived in either the World Trade Center or the planes which levelled them. Footage of what happened inside those terrible places would not have added to our understanding but merely added visual detail to already vivid nightmares.

The *other* argument in favour of broadcast is stronger in this case. With newspapers and internet providers disseminating images from the Beslan video, why should television be reticent? This is a reasonable point: a medium regularly derided by the print media as immoral is being asked to sustain higher standards than the press.

Yet, even here, the reasoning is not unanswerable. Most who have experienced bereavement would accept that it is more distressing to watch a video of the deceased than to see a still photograph. Moving pictures restore the person to the appearance of living. For this reason – rather than the traditional cliché that TV is invited into viewers' homes – it can be argued that television should be more careful than newspapers with images of death and violence.

The final consideration in this case is the provenance of the video. Shot by the terrorists, it was released to the media by Russian authorities. So both the making of the tape and its dissemination had propaganda purposes: the terrorists and then the Russian government seeking to increase their support. Yet both of these effects were most likely to be achieved in a Russian context than a British one, where the impact on Putin's re-election hopes is minimal.

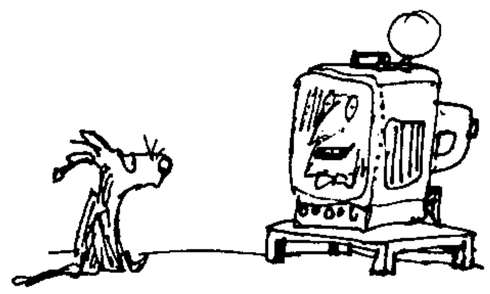
So, while there are few compelling reasons not to show the pictures, there are also very few to do so. Most viewers will have concluded that the images of what happened in their school matched their worst imaginings and then wished afterwards not to have added these new frames to our memory-bank of horror. TV is often accused of irresponsibility; but the use of the Beslan footage wasn't that: it was a sort of responsible pointlessness.

'Remote Controller'

GOING LIVE

WHEN Radio Five Live went to reporter Shelagh Fogarty outside RFU headquarters for the latest on the resignation of England rugby coach Sir Clive Woodward, she was asked from the studio: "What will his reasons be [for resigning]?"

"Well, without trying to be facetious, I wouldn't have got up at 5am to be here if I knew that," said the hackette helpfully.



MEDIA NEWS

THE BBC came up with several new ways to make life harder for its producers in its Uriah Heep-like response to the Hutton report.

A "compliance form" now has to be filled in for every pre-recorded programme broadcast. Producers must indicate whether programmes contain strong language or violence or whether "personal views" or "major controversial matters" are aired. Already this catches 80 percent of output.

What grieves producers most is that editorial decisions once made by programme-makers are now made by suits. Some producers have failed to be compliant enough – "forgetting" to fill in their forms. The "compliance unit" is now talking tough, threatening to take programmes off the air if forms aren't delivered.

"WHO needs Al-Jazeera when you've got the *Guardian* and the BBC?" demanded *Sun* columnist Richard Littlejohn in May, in one of his customary rants against the politically-correct lefties who run the media.

His own show on Sky News, complete with regular rants in favour of the war and slanging matches with Muslim "extremists", did its best to redress the balance. Sadly, the station dumped the Littlejohn show this summer.

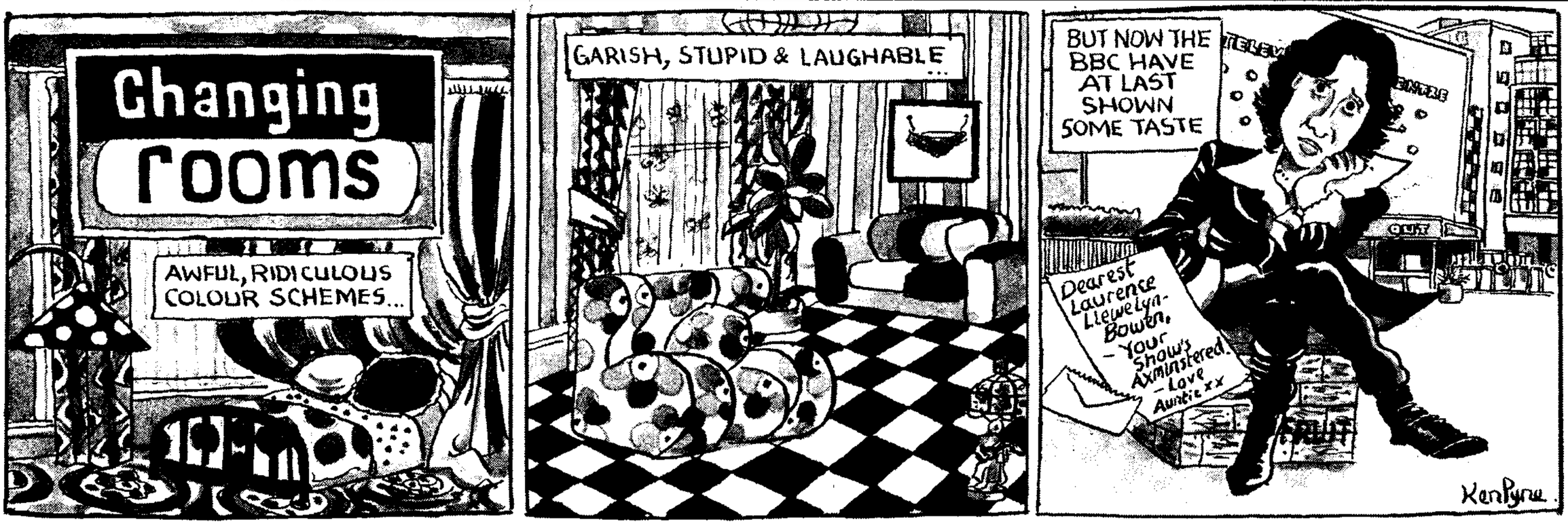
While Sky bosses may not have deemed it a success, it did impress other broadcasters – so much so that Littlejohn's executive producer Steve Clarke has been headhunted by another network. Last week it was announced that he is off to Qatar to work on the launch of an English-language service for… Al-Jazeera!

HATS off to Catherine Marston of BBC News 24 for her coverage of a fatal accident caused when a driver became distracted by making a mobile phone call at the wheel.

Marston managed two pieces delivered directly to camera – the camera placed on the seat next to her – as she drove along the same stretch where the accident had taken place.

THE past few months have seen a string of redundancies and cutbacks at cash-strapped Sky TV. So Sky hacks have been thrilled to find out that Sky political editor Adam Boulton is immune from such miserliness.

In possibly the biggest Sky scoop for years, the hacks have discovered that Boulton earns a salary not unadjacent to £480,000 and gets a clothes allowance as well! "Quite right too!" is the overriding sentiment amongst Sky's otherwise underpaid, overworked, multi-tasking staff.


Changing rooms
AWFUL, RIDICULOUS COLOUR SCHEMES...
GARISH, STUPID & LAUGHABLE...
BUT NOW THE BBC HAVE AT LAST SHOWN SOME TASTE
Dearest Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, – Your show's Axminstered. – Love Auntie xx
Ken Pyne

AD NAUSEAM

AS Sainsbury's rolls out another new Jamie Oliver shtick extolling the quality and freshness of its bread, questions are still being asked about the last ad in which Oliver praised Butcher's Choice sausages – as you would too for £1m a year.

In the ad Oliver wandered through open fields asking what goes in to Sainsbury's sausages. Behind him were pig arks, suggesting outdoor-reared pigs. So does Sainsbury's use outdoor-reared, free-range pork in Butcher's Choice sausages? Er…

Sainsbury's response began thus: "This advert is promoting pork products in general, hence a piggery." How odd that an ad promoting pork products in general ended with a splash saying that Butcher's Choice sausages cost £1.69 for eight. The Sainsbury's spokesman then continued: "In this instance an open variety was used in the filming. In detail, the pork for the Butcher's Choice range of sausages is reared in pens in sheds."

So much for the scenes of bucolic bliss portrayed in AMV's ad. Presumably scenes of Oliver scrumming down in a pig shed wouldn't have played so well.

PS: Sainsbury's says the Jamie Oliver ads, accurate or otherwise, have boosted sales by £1.1bn.

HSBC's current ad campaign continues the theme of "The World's Local Bank". But it's just another of those empty oxymorons beloved of financial institutions who have nothing interesting, different or persuasive to offer customers but need to show their marketing muscle to keep up with the other banks.

Given that in March HSBC announced a clean profit of £7.7bn, the highest ever recorded by a UK-based bank, and given that just five fat cat staffers split £30m between them, a simply "sorry" would have sufficed. But that's not how banking or advertising work.

Instead, HSBS's most recent spot shows a motorbike rider touring South America using the internationally-recognised "I'm okay" signal with a circled thumb and index finger, before eating at a Brazilian café where the gesture is met with horror. "We never underestimate the importance of local knowledge," says the voiceover.

In fact in this instance HSBC and its agency Lowe (now sacked) didn't have any local knowledge at all: Brazilians also understand the gesture to be affirmative. It is only when it's reversed, with the back, not the palm of the hand facing outwards, that it becomes offensive. Presumably the world's local bankers were too busy splitting the booty to notice.

SOUND advice from the Toys R Us freebie in-store magazine *Family Life*, which reviewed Kelloggs "Real Fruit Winder" sweets in its latest issue and recommended against giving them to children.

Despite Kelloggs' claim that the chewy sweets have "all the goodness of fruit", the magazine found they are "full of sugar and will stick to [children's] teeth at the end of meals – a real cause of tooth decay".

So what were Toys R Us staff handing out as free gifts in their Plymouth branch this summer? Free Fruit Winders for all the family!

JUST FANCY THAT!

"BOARDROOM pay bonanza goes on," the *Guardian* tut-tutted as it revealed in an exclusive survey how directors' pay had climbed 12.8 percent, or three times faster than average earnings last year.

Sadly, despite a front-page lead, a double-page spread inside and further stories the next day, there wasn't space to reveal that Sir Robert Phillis, chief executive of the Guardian Media Group, saw his own take-home salary leap an above-average 14 percent to £643,000.

THE NEOPHILIACS

"Japan is the new rock and roll for fund managers." — Lex column, *Financial Times*.

"Cookery confirmed as new rock'n'roll." — *Sunday Herald*.

"Weather is [the] new foot and mouth." — *Daily Telegraph*.

"Being uncool is the new cool." — Justin Hawkins of the Darkness, the *Times*.

"Why make-up is the new therapy." – the *Times*.

"Architects are the new gardeners." – the *Times*.

"Why September is the new August." — *Western Mail*.

"Asians are the new blacks." — *New Statesman*.

"Stupid is the new clever." — *Financial Times*.

"Camping is the new taramasalata." — *Independent* property magazine.

"Spiritual and mental renewal is the new suntan." — GMTV.

"Candour is the new discretion." — Jonathan Cainer, *Daily Mail*.

NEWS FROM BESLAN

A SIEGE is a tricky news event to cover. It can tie up a reporter for many days or even weeks, so newsdesks often junior (ie cheaper) hacks to do the early footwork before sending the big names once the hostages/corpses start to emerge.

But news editors know that star reporters can be created overnight if the shooting starts on their watch (remember Kate Adie at the Iranian embassy siege?) Hence the effort made by the *News of the Screws* on 5 September to plug "Sky News Girl" Rachel Amatt, the "single reporter from west London" who "witnessed the Russian school massacre unfold first hand".

The rag managed to include a picture of her – a video grab of one of her pieces to camera "in the line of fire" – tastefully superimposed over a picture of relatives trying to identify the bodies of their children. Good to see priorities remain intact in the News Corp empire.

LUVVIES

"It's like terrorism – you can't not do stuff because of dissent."

MINNIE DRIVER (on coping with press criticism)
Guardian

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

It was unanimous - you the fans voted 70-30 in favour of having a well known brand as opposed to a PNE brand on the new home shirt.

Northender – Preston North End FC

"...and here's one of us 20 seconds ago"

CRITICS IN CON-TEXT

THE Bollywood-style production of *Twelfth Night* currently playing at the Albery in London's West End is, if its press ads are to be believed, "magical" according to the *Independent*.

Well, up to a point, Lord Orsino – specifically act one, scene one, which Paul Taylor described as "a magical start". Sadly, however, he concluded that as a whole the production "leaves you wishing that the concept had been carried out with, well, more inspiration… excellent fancies are fluffed in the execution."

Over in the *Guardian*, Lynn Gardner agreed, pointing out that although "transposing the play to modern India is terrific idea", the show was let down by its performers – in particular, "Sir Toby and his gang are less than hilarious." Naturally, this is quoted in the production's adverts thus: "A TERRIFIC IDEA, HILARIOUS."

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: Which country in South America is named after the revolutionary and explorer Simon Bolivar?

Contestant: Brazil.

BBC Radio Lancashire (The Word Wizard Challenge: all answers start with the letters MIN.)

Presenter: Name one of the Balearic Islands.

Contestant: Yemen.

DUMB AMERICA

Studio 7, The WB Network

Presenter: Which former British prime minister provided a eulogy by video link at the funeral of Ronald Reagan?

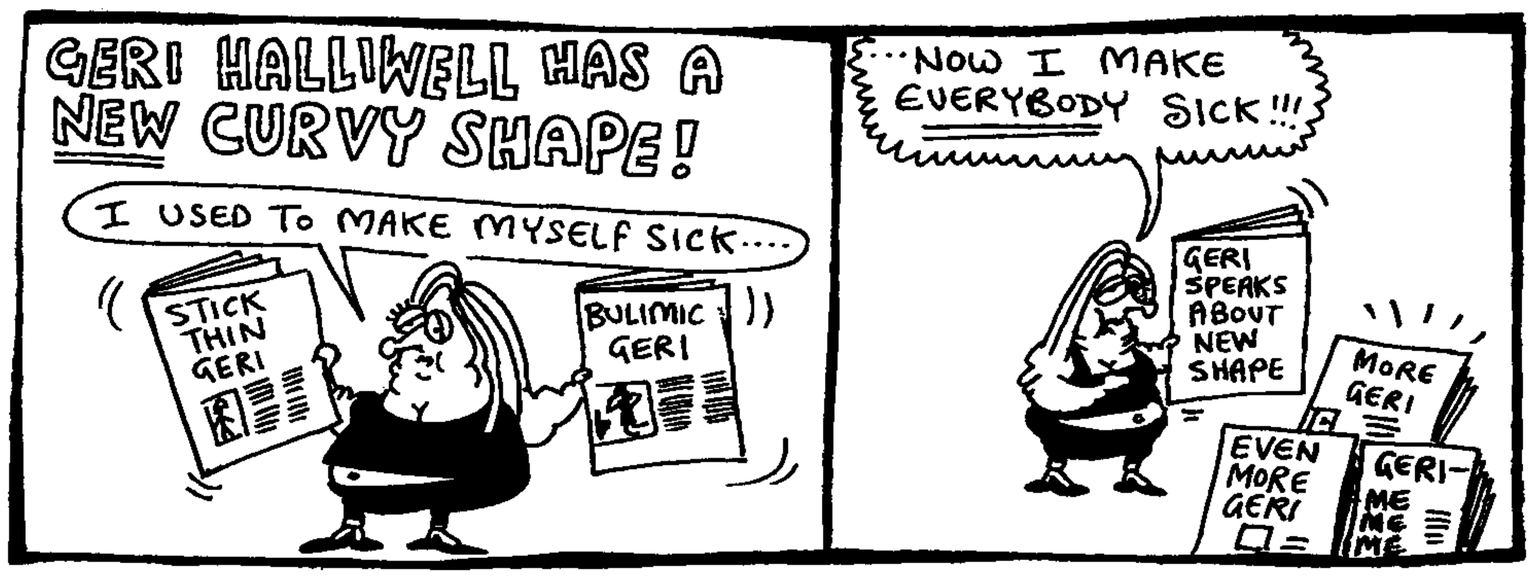
Contestant: Winston Churchill.

Presenter: Which former British colony was handed back to the Chinese in 1997?

Contestant: London.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


GERI HALLIWELL HAS A NEW CURVY SHAPE!
I USED TO MAKE MYSELF SICK....
STICK THIN GERI
BULIMIC GERI
...NOW I MAKE EVERYBODY SICK!!!
GERI SPEAKS ABOUT NEW SHAPE
MORE GERI
EVEN MORE GERI
GERI-ME ME ME

DOING THE ROUNDS

The Hyde Six

NOT EVERY GP who signed the third part of Harold Shipman's cremation forms has been reported to the general medical council (GMC).

Those who were deemed by the inquiry to have done their jobs adequately (ie they spoke to Shipman after the death, examined the body properly and contacted the relatives) still weren't able to spot the work of a serial killer. So little will be gained from demonising "the Hyde Six" other than to deflect blame away from the GMC itself.

Like every practising doctor I know, I've never made a meticulous examination of a corpse when I've filled in crem forms. We could reasonably be expected to spot a machete in the back, but not to go over the body with a fine-tooth comb to spot puncture points which in the vast majority of cases will have been from therapeutic drug injections. Those doctors who phoned Shipman found that he didn't admit to murdering his patients with massive opiate injections. And at the time, phoning the relatives to corroborate the GP's story was neither obligatory nor common practice. The profession, for good and bad, ran on the mutual trust of colleagues.

Getting the cause of death wrong is surprisingly common. Post-mortem examinations find that doctors get it wrong between 30 and 50 percent of the time. We often write "bronchopneumonia" or "ischaemic heart disease" on the death certificate; but it owes as much to informed guesswork as anything else. Alas, the over-reaction to the widespread practice of organ retention has made it even less likely for relatives to consent to PMs. Many people die without us every knowing the true cause of death.

So, aside from the sheer volume of Shipman's deaths, which one of the GPs reported to the coroner and police (who found nothing amiss), could they reasonably be expected to suspect he was a murderer? The routine rubber-stamping of cremation forms was such a widespread practice at the time that dozens of other GPs are now threatening to bring the GMC to a standstill by reporting themselves for being equally negligent. And any GPs sitting on the professional conduct committee will surely be thinking: "There but for the grace of God, etc."

Some GPs are refusing to sign cremation forms now, either in protest or because they deem that £50 "ash cash" for driving to the funeral parlour, examining the body, phoning the GP and now phoning the distressed relatives to invite their suspicions isn't worth the risk of censure should they fail to spot a well-disguised murder. It also seems likely that many more GPs will refer cases to the under-staffed coroner, even if they fall outside the official referral guidelines, to cover their backs.

Two of the GPs reported to the GMC have retired from practice post-Shipman, one with anxiety and depression. Others have been working their butts of in Hyde trying to re-establish the trust Shipman destroyed. Dragging them to the GMC when most other GPs at that time would have behaved the same way is unlikely to achieve anything constructive and may further deprive the patients of GPs in an area where recruitment is hardly booming.

M.D.

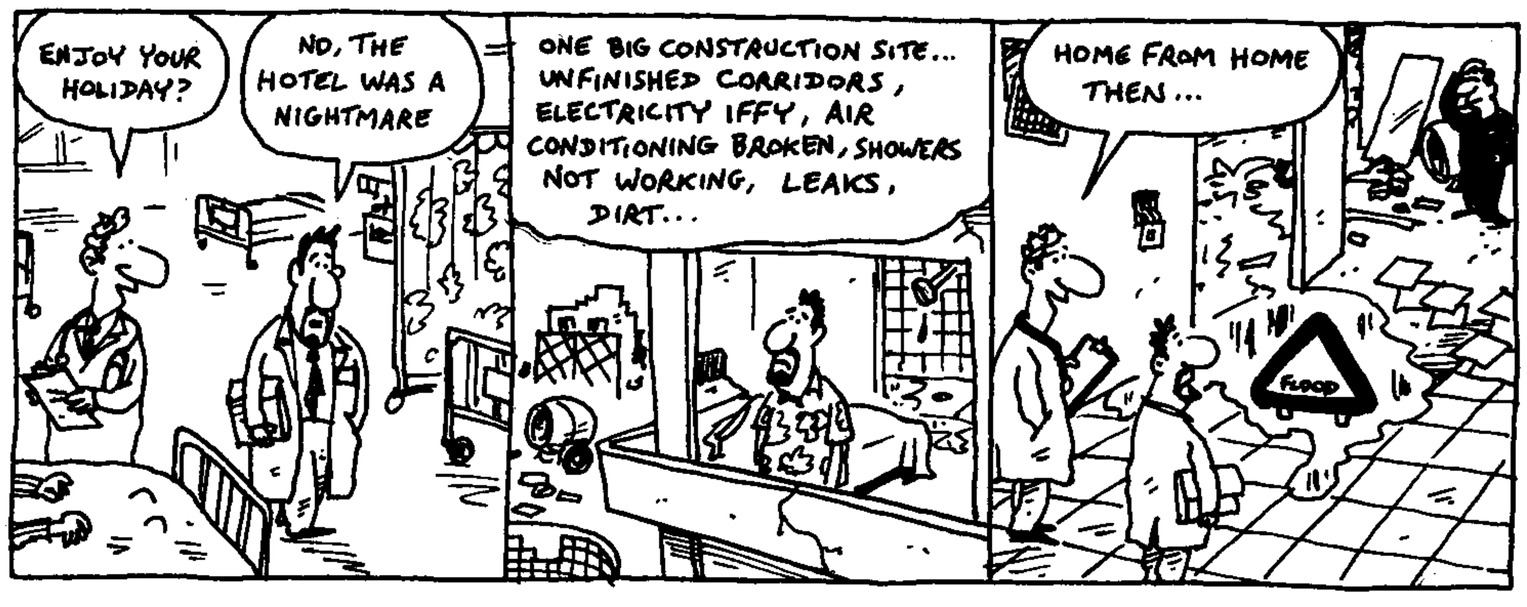
THE new NHS online hospital appointments system managed fewer than 10 successful bookings in two months of trials this summer.

The "choose and book" system, a cornerstone of the £2.3bn national programme for NHS IT (NPfIT), is due to go live at the end of this month. But trials at GP surgeries have been an unmitigated flop through July and August. NHS experts told *Computing* magazine that they were "relatively relaxed", but BT, which is supplying the system, has already been fined for delays.

The national audit office (NAO) is already taking an interest in the NPfIT, having announced plans for a study into how the system was chosen and whether it is good value for money. The giant contract is divided into five regions and awarded to companies familiar to *Eye* readers for their previous successes in government IT work – including Accenture, Fujitsu and BT.

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY


ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAY?
NO, THE HOTEL WAS A NIGHTMARE
ONE BIG CONSTRUCTION SITE... UNFINISHED CORRIDORS, ELECTRICITY IFFY, AIR CONDITIONING BROKEN, SHOWERS NOT WORKING, LEAKS, DIRT...
HOME FROM HOME THEN...
FLOOD

SIGNAL FAILURES

Incompetence pays

THE chaotic way Railtrack was run may have saved the company, now replaced by Network Rail, from being tried for corporate manslaughter over the Hatfield accident in 2000.

A judge at the royal courts of justice ruled that there was no evidence Railtrack executives had connived in any alleged offence. Previous attempts to convict large companies of manslaughter have also foundered on the difficulty of finding a "directing mind" in the organisation – a specific manager or managers whose orders created the causes of an accident. Railtrack was such a shambles it arguably didn't have any directing minds. The biggest decision it ever made was to hand out vital maintenance work to assorted private companies, which were left to get on with the job with little supervision.

As Railtrack directors weren't in control of what was happening on their infrastructure, it's apparently impossible to blame them for specific events which led to an accident. Several executives from Railtrack and contractor Balfour Beatty still face charges under the health and safety at work act in relation to Hatfield, but previous convictions for breaching that law resulted in fines that were small beer to Railtrack.

The Hatfield derailment, which killed four people, was no freak accident caused by unpredictable events. It was a natural consequence of the way railways were maintained after privatisation, when many things were not being done as they should have been and used to be (see *Eyes passim*). Railtrack's incompetence was embarrassingly on show in the weeks after the accident when hundreds of 20mph restrictions threw the rail network into meltdown, because so-called managers had no idea where a carbon-copy derailment might occur.

There were plenty of warnings, to no avail, that Railtrack's use of contractors for safety-critical work was causing dangers. The warnings included a series of accidents and close shaves highlighted in the *Eye* from leaked Railtrack logs. But despite changes being promised for years, English law has yet to find a way to convict even a corporation as incompetent in safety management as Railtrack of anything more profound than lax safety in the workplace.

CUTTING the number of places that have direct trains from Liverpool is emerging as a bizarre new policy from Labour.

The city (whose MPs are all Labour) lost all its Virgin Cross-Country services last year when the government's "strategic" rail authority (SRA) decided action was needed to improve the franchise. For the first time in decades, Merseysiders had to change trains to get to places like Oxford and Reading. Trains from Liverpool to Cambridge and Stansted airport have also disappeared. This month Liverpool loses another established service: its direct link to Shrewsbury, Hereford and Cardiff.

Not content with stopping existing services, the government now wants to preclude future ones. It plans to close a short track which connects two rail routes in Runcorn for trains to go direct from Liverpool to Chester and north Wales. Liverpool doesn't have any such services although crowds of Scousers travel to Welsh resorts every summer. Local councils want the threatened track to take a future service from Chester to Liverpool's growing airport, for which a new rail station is under construction.

'Dr B. Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

LINCS STINKS

FORMER Lincolnshire county council leader Jim Speechley (*Eyes passim*) may have been jailed for 18 months in April after attempting to change the route of a bypass in order to boost the value of land he owned, but the ruling Conservative group remains "morally bankrupt and rotten to the core", according to the council's outgoing chief executive David Bowles.

Bowles, whose departure at the end of the month is being eased with a £400,000 pay-off, told Stinkinshire councillors in a farewell address: "Lies are the cancer which pervades this council. Staff *talk* to me about the Conservative group being morally bankrupt and rotten to the core. I have never worked in a council where officers at all levels openly show so much contempt for those in power."

Just as Bowles was warming to his theme he was cut off by council chairman Charles Ireland. He circulated the rest of the text of his speech to members, staff and the press, in which he predicted further audit commission investigations into Stinkinshire which "would do huge further damage to the council". He appealed to councillors to "change the leadership" to save the council. Ashen-faced council leader and Speechley puppet Ian Croft then wound up proceedings... by wishing Bowles well for the future.

● SPEECHLEY himself, who won Rotten Boroughs' Brass-Necked Councillor of the Year award in 2002, has mounted a strong bid to regain his title. At the end of August he was released from prison wearing an electronic tag and ordered to observe a night-time curfew at his home. Three days later Speechley, 67, turned up at a Stinkinshire council meeting which had been called to discuss, er, his failure to attend council meetings. The meeting was promptly brought to a close after chairman Charles Ireland observed that as Speechley was present there was no longer anything to discuss. Speechley claims that he remains a councillor, and therefore entitled to draw his £601 a month allowance, pending the outcome of his appeal against conviction, due next month. He is believed to be the first convicted criminal to have sat in a council chamber wearing an electronic tag.

EVER BEEN GAGGED?

THE Labour regime making such a hash of the regeneration of the benighted borough of Hastings is clearly feeling the strain.

As the *Eye* went to press we learnt that the council's deputy leader, Jay Kramer, had applied to Hastings county court for an injunction restraining local protester Evelyn Modlinger from "harassing" her. Ms Kramer is seeking up to £1,000 damages and costs from Ms Modlinger after a series of encounters which Cllr Kramer claims caused her "anxiety, distress and personal injury".

All this amounts to, in fact, is that Cllr Kramer objected to Ms Modlinger, who narrowly failed to be elected as a Lib Dem candidate at the June council elections, handing out leaflets criticising Labour policies at a council meeting and, on another occasion, approaching her in the street and asking "Why are you ruining Hastings?" — to which Kramer's measured response was: "You should go and see a psychiatrist."

Kramer claims that Modlinger shouted and swore at her; a claim Modlinger strongly denies. Friends of Modlinger, a mild-mannered, slightly-built woman in her 50s, find it very hard to believe indeed. Evelyn Modlinger told the *Eye*: "This is an attempt to stifle protest and malign my character for political gain. Jay Kramer is a hard-nosed, streetwise campaigner in one of the toughest boroughs in the country. She is used to being questioned and criticised. If everyone Jay Kramer had shouted at took out an injunction against her, there would be few people left for her to converse with."

When the *Eye* contacted Cllr Kramer she referred us to the council's press officer, Kevin Boorman, who said it would be "inappropriate" to comment on the case. He confirmed that the council's legal department was "supporting" Cllr Kramer and said "such a course of action is not undertaken lightly".

No doubt the court will sort it all out.

DIVINE COMEDY

RESIDENTS of Valley ward in Waltham Forest, east London, face a long trek should they wish to raise issues with their councillor, David Divine. Since January Divine has been professor of Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie University in New Brunswick, Canada.

Elected as a Tory councillor in May 2002, Divine has continued to receive his monthly allowance of £660 despite attending only occasional meetings. On the rare occasions Divine has turned up, his appearance has been greeted by Labour councillors with hearty renditions of Monty Python's "He's a lumberjack and he's OK".

Initially, Divine refused to resign and claimed he would deal with constituents by phone and email. Then in June he wrote to the chief executive saying he would resign at the end of August, but has so far failed to do so.

UNCLE TOM'S CAVIL

MUCH embarrassment for Ulster's saintly SDLP, the "moderate" nationalist party which grew out of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement of the 1960s, which in turn drew its inspiration from the non-violent US civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King — a link the party makes much of.

During an otherwise tedious debate on local government reorganisation at a meeting of Newtownabbey council in County Antrim in July, SDLP councillor Tommy McTeague, 78, said councillors in Northern Ireland were being "treated like niggers" by the government. To make sure there was no mistake he repeated the N-word later in the meeting. McTeague was not challenged about what he had said by any other member in the chamber, nor was he asked to withdraw the comments.

Only after the story became public did the councillor concede his terminology was "ill-judged, inexcusable and plain wrong". As a result all SDLP councillors are to undergo anti-racism training, starting next week.

SO. FAREWELL THEN...

1 Neville "fuck the Irish" Sanders, former Tory leader of Peterborough city council, who was last week barred from elected office for two years by the independent adjudication panel of England which decided he had broken the local government code of conduct by "failing to treat others with respect" and "bringing the office of councillor into disrepute". The case arose after Sanders, 73, responded to a request to support an inquiry into the suicide and possible bullying of a young recruit at a Royal Irish Regiment barracks by saying he was fed up with paying taxes "for the lazy bastards in Ireland" and opining that members of the armed forces should expect to die because "that is what they are paid for" (*Eye* 1104).

2 Graham "Club Class" Farrant, who is quitting as chief executive of Barking and Dagenham council after four-and-a-half years. Farrant (*Eyes passim*), whose liking for jetting halfway round the world to spout corporate pseudspeak at conferences earned him his affectionate sobriquet, is to become chief executive of Leisure Connection, the private firm whose pisspoor management of council leisure facilities at authorities including Hackney, Salisbury, Dorking, Great Yarmouth, Brent and Cheltenham has featured in Rotten Boroughs. Clearly a company in need of Farrant's "blue-sky thinking". Perhaps Leisure Connection staff would benefit as much as did B&D's in 2002 when Farrant spent £40,000 getting 180 council officers to prance about in Arab headgear and pith helmets for a "team building" day.

3 Colin Bromfield, who has resigned as Nottinghamshire county council's cabinet member for culture, following an investigation into his expenses, in particular numerous calls on his mobile to a telephone number in Siberia, believed to be that of a translator, Ms Irina Legova, who had helped Mr Bromfield on council business in Russia (*Eye* 1114).

A reply to Councillor Heath's verse complaint in the last issue

Thank you, Mr Heath, for your attempt at verse;
It's true to say we have seen worse.

Although you insist our story's pants
You still haven't told us why you left Northants.

Or why your farewell was so generous
If not quite leaving the council penniless.

The DA cleared me, you retort –
But why, then, can't we see his report?

And as for Monks, you must agree,
His prosecution was a travesty.

No warnings, no chance to make amends,
Convicted on dodgy evidence.

Why should this one trader have been singled out
When so many others were given benefit of doubt?

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON — KNIFE & PACKER

EVERY DAY MY INBOX IS FULL TO BURSTING WITH OBSCENE AND DISGUSTING JUNK MAIL...
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME? PENIS EXTENSIONS? NUDE CELEBRITIES? CHEAP VIAGRA?
NO, MUCH WORSE THAN THAT. TAKE A LOOK AT THIS: IT'S A GRAPHIC, EXPLICIT, NO-HOLDS-BARRED "TIMESHARE OPPORTUNITY IN TORREMOLINOS"...
SICK

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE further the Second World War recedes, the more memorials to it that are being demanded – and the worse their quality becomes.

After the war, just to carve two more dates – "1939-1945" – on the Cenotaph seemed enough. But today we must have memorials to those involved in every aspect. There is even to be a memorial to the animals who "served": dogs, horses and pigeons (this is not a joke).

The problem is that we can't do memorials any more. After the Great War of 1914-1918, we raised monuments of high sophistication, poignant statements which had meaning as they were rooted in a resonant Classical tradition. We had architects like Edwin Lutyens who could monumentalise and abstract, and there were good sculptors and letter-cutters to enhance the results. But our artistic decline since means that today we get woodenly realistic statues on plinths like shoe boxes which would look more at home in Tirana or Pyongyang. That of Mountbatten in Horse Guards Parade is a good, execrable example. And even our modern traditionalists can't get it right. The first design for the Memorial Gates at the top of Constitution Hill – intended to commemorate the wartime contribution of the Commonwealth – was a gauche, vulgar concept by Liam O'Connor, one of the Prince of Wales's modern Classical cronies. What was inaugurated in 2002 was much better, however, because another modern Classicist, John Simpson, took a good look at what Lutyens and Herbert Baker were doing in c.1920 and so achieved a passable result.

The process by which these war memorials get designed and built is curious and opaque. Take the Women of World War II Memorial which is to be unveiled next year. The original scheme launched in 1997 was to place a bronze group of three servicewomen in the uniforms of the ATS, the WRAAF and the WRNS on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square.

This idea was not promising (and the site quite wrong), but perhaps a sculptor of genius could have made something of it. However, the memorial committee, in consultation with Westminster city council, changed the concept to a memorial to honour *all* women who served and helped win the war. Fair enough: but the new design, supported by the likes of Betty Boothroyd and Vera Lynn, is to be a sculpture of a crouching ARP women protecting two children with her (man's) greatcoat. And, to illustrate the many roles played by women in the war, the plinth is to be ornamented with different uniforms hung on hooks around the sides – possibly an interesting idea, but verging on the ridiculous.

The sculptor is John W. Mills and the whole thing is to be 22 feet high and placed in Whitehall where the effete statue of Sir Walter Raleigh stood until recently. The contrast with the austere simplicity of the Cenotaph will be telling.

Much worse is to come on the Victoria Embankment between Hungerford and Westminster bridges. Here, a former granite smoke vent for the District Railway, 80 feet long, is to be made into a Battle of Britain Memorial. Given the crucial importance of the conflict, a memorial is certainly appropriate and, back in 1987, the late Theo Crosby and the sculptor Michael Sandle proposed a colossal Post-Modern monument in the Isle of Dogs topped by a downed Heinkel bomber. But this was too ambitious. In the end, the Battle of Britain Historical Society organised a competition for the more modest Embankment site in 2001.

One entrant was Sandle, a sculptor who has actually made distinguished memorials, like the Malta Siege Bell Memorial, who understands the tradition and who does not sentimentalise about war. But the winner was Scottish Neo-Classical sculptor Alexander Stoddart, who proposed two naked male figures either side of a pyramid raised above the plinth. This allegorical concept was not, however, to the liking of the architect who organised the competition, Tony Dyson of Donald Insall Associates (who is also behind the Animals at War memorial). Somehow, after consultation with Westminster council, a design was approved by Dyson with sculpture by Paul Day, who specialises in "high relief sculpture".

The granite plinth is now to be sliced through diagonally, to give it a fashionable de-constructionist feel, and embellished with long friezes by Day. In these, fighter pilots leap out of the frame and Spitfires wheel through the sky *[see detail]*. It is like something out of a cartoon strip, like "Paddy Payne – Fighter Pilot" in the old *Lion* boy's comic. Why such trite, vulgar realism is necessary in the age of photography and film is hard to understand.

Further along the Embankment is Reggie Blomfield's RAF Memorial, which manages to commemorate the flyers of World War One with a single gilded eagle above a fine pylon. But the most telling comparison is with the Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner. No sentimentality here: tough, giant bronze figures of artillerymen by that very great artist, Charles Sargent Jagger, have a powerful dignity while his carved stone friezes are at once realistic and idealised, formalising the action in a traditional archaic manner while still conveying the brutality of war. We have sunk a long way since this artistic triumph.

'Piloti'

I-SPY *Tenby*

Submitted by Nigel Davies. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs)*

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

SO. Farewell then Tugan Sokhiev, music director of Welsh National Opera. Since this column sniffed out trouble in the valleys for Sokhiev several weeks ago, events have taken their course.

Having fallen foul of his players and proved himself not up to the job, the fragrant young Russian conductor dramatically resigned and did a runner, leaving his champion and boss, WNO's general director Anthony Freud, in crisis.

Freud's decision to give Sokhiev the job at the tender age of 25 has proved such a disastrous misjudgment it puts his *own* job on the line. And he has to sort out the mess in time to put on the required brave face when WNO takes official possession of its new home, the long-time-coming Wales Millennium Centre, in November.

For the short term he has persuaded the company's former music director, Carlo Rizzi, to take over Sokhiev's dates and see WNO through the move. But finding a permanent successor won't be easy; and the Sokhiev debacle won't endear WNO to its paymasters at the Welsh assembly, where support for the arts is not in any event a priority. Witness the current fate of the National Eisteddfod.

A venerable if creaky fixture and supposedly the heart of Welsh cultural life, the Eisteddfod is a spectacle half way between the Last Night of the Proms and Gathering of the Clans. Its serried ranks of stiff-backed men in nylon slacks and blazers belting out Cwm Rhondda slightly off the note goes to the essence of what Welshness is. But it's in massive debt and on the point of going under. Last year's gathering near Welshpool lost £130,000. This year's, at Newport, has just lost another £250,000. And the Eisteddfod council has, in panic, applied to the Welsh assembly for emergency support.

But is the assembly rushing to assist? Like hell it is. The Welsh culture minister has merely replied that the Eisteddfod's annual grant was increased by 20 percent this year, which should have been enough; and that he will discuss the matter with council officials later in the autumn – by which time the council may have been wiped from the face of the earth, along with all those men in slacks. That this may be a cloud with a silver lining is a thought nobody west of Offa's Dyke dare speak.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

The art critics are slagging off the Tate...
ARTS
Tracey Emin joins Tate's Hall of Fame.
Her own room, like Constable and Blake.
... for not honouring her sooner.
I soon saw through the vulgar façade to the great artist within.
That seminal time she was pissed on TV!
GROUCHO CLUB MEMBERS ONLY
Not winning the Turner was the making of her.

PRESS POLICY

It is the policy of The South Bucks Star to correct ant errors in print.

South Bucks Star

Thought for the day

LUKE 18 V 14: Jesus said, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who mumbles himself will be exalted."

E. Anglian Daily Times

Letters

Private Eye

Top Marks

Sir,

I was very impressed by the cover (1114) this week. Certainly one of the highlights of the year. However, I do feel that the Mail on Sunday may have even gone one better with their view of the issue in vouching for Sir Mark's character.

Mark is one of the kindest men I've ever met

By Jonathan Aitken

MARK Thatcher is in the frame and on the rack. No friends of this solitary, self-contained man are apparently willing to say a good word for him in his hour of travail.

This is surprising because I know that there's a different Mark Thatcher to the one we've all been reading about.

"COMPASSIONATE": Mark Thatcher

Regards,
BRIAN HICKEY,

Via email.

Size matters

Sir,

The published size of the piggy-banks in LOOT! (Eye 1113, p27) must be a comfort to those in the boardroom. Their bank is twice the width of that of the rest of the company when it should be 3,736 times bigger. In fact it should be nearly 38 metres wide: the same as five years worth of Eyes laid end to end. Now, if it is an areal rather than dimensional comparison... (That's enough maths. Ed.)

Yours faithfully,
JASON DITTON,

Via email.

Lookalike

Julie

Stephanie

Sir,

Is Julie Walters appearing for the summer season in Monaco as Princess Stephanie? I am sure your readers would be interested in this new career direction.

Yours faithfully,
CELIA BEADLE,

Cambridge.

Piling on the £s

Sir,

I have read your esteemed organ for many years and was stunned by Claire Robinson's letter in issue 1114 "food for thought". Has she ever shopped in the big supermarkets in London? I don't think so. The prices for "healthy eating foods" is astronomical in comparison to their packaged items and can easily put a few £s on any shopping bill. Not good for low-income families like myself. This can be very frustrating and annoying when people like Claire make these unjustified comments.

Yours extremely narked,
CATHERINE ANDREW,

Via email.

Ill wind

Sir,

Dr B. Ching's sneer at Scotrail for the "most feeble excuse of the week" for poor performance is actually the "most feeble" anti-rail snipe of the month (Eye 1114).

I was in Scotland at the time of Hurricane Alex and I can assure your worthy oriental doctor that it most certainly had repercussions on the west coast and elsewhere, vide *a temporary breach of the Largs line by a landslide. Doubtless Dr B. Ching would regard that as a "feeble excuse" for delay to trains, just as, presumably, he would consider the avalanches near Lochearnhead and at Dunkeld as a "feeble excuse" for closing the roads.*

Yours sincerely,
KEITH FARR,

Cholsey, Oxon.

Nave and fool

Sir,

I am a young(ish) Anglican priest, which is just as well, as I still (hopefully) have many years with your publication so I can live to see the day when Piloti congratulates a "go-ahead vicar" on some change made to a church. At present the column seems only to drum out a no-change-at-all beat, which would seem, to me, to fly in the face of history. "A great mediaeval church" such as described recently, is almost always not purely medieval at all, but will have had changes to it from every generation. Should we stop this? I am rector of six great medieval churches, and one indeed has a glass screen, which is in keeping, but also allows, along with a modern window, and other changes we plan, to allow us the integrity of adding our own mark on our great buildings. Heritage, properly understood, is enhancing our buildings, to allow them to be useful, as well as beautiful. May I take this opportunity to suggest one of your illustrious cartoonists pictures Piloti shaking hands with a go-ahead vicar and congratulating them on a change, or is that a scene you never see?

Otherwise keep up the good work,
REVEREND CHRIS GOBLE,

Great Brington, Northants.

Matthew's gospel

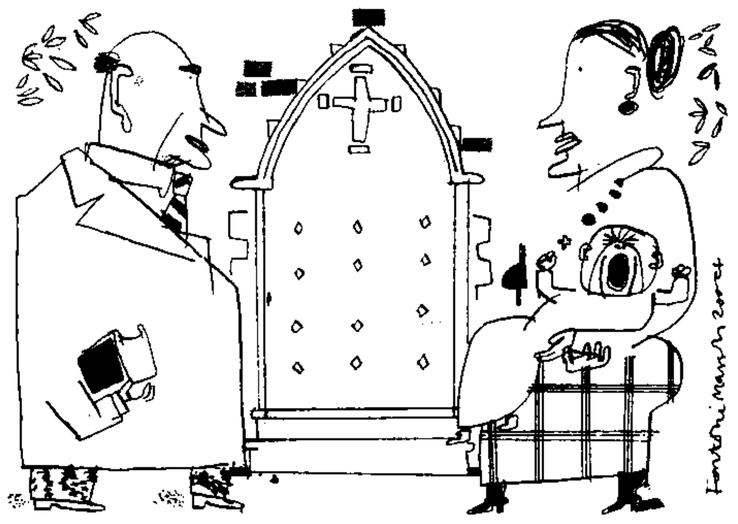
Sir,

Fighting New Labour fat-cattery (Rolls Royce pensions for PPF, Eye 1113) doesn't make me a Tory.

MATTHEW OAKESHOTT,

Lib Dem pensions spokesman, House of Lords.

Scenes You Seldom See



"He won't stop crying, so I've taken him out of the service"

Res ipsa loquitor

Sir,

In contrast to a significant number of people who work for Private Eye and who are probably posh gits who went to public schools, I went to a secondary modern.

As is common knowledge, kids like me weren't taught English let alone Latin. The next time you publish a "Degree Citation In Full" would you please provide a translation so I know what it is I'm laughing at.

You have had a similar request (Eyes passim) from a reader in relation to Dumb Britain – why did you stop publishing the answers? I think we should be told.

Yours sincerely,
G. MYERS,

Ilkley, Yorks.

PS: What does "passim" mean?

Lookalike

Marr

Putin

Sir,

Have you noticed the sinister similarities between these two?

I have heard that one has his roots in a subversive organisation involved in the dissemination of enemy propaganda. The other is a former head of the KGB.

Should be warned about these double agent doubles?

Yours,
TOM HOYLE,

Leeds.

Defence of the realm

Sir,

There is an error in our issue 1114.

The UK Defence Forum isn't an arms group.

It is, for want of a better expression, a think tank (not for profit) which has been generating information on international defence and security issues for parliamentarians of all parties since 1996.

Its past output is publicly available at www.ukdf.org.uk

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN ASHBY,

Director UK Defence Forum.

Foot balls

Sir,

RE: Paul Foot and Hanratty and letter from Bill White (1114).

The reaction of Paul Foot to the DNA results linking Hanratty with the 1961 A6 murder of John Gregsten and the rape and attempted murder of Valerie Storie, showed both the good and bad of Foot's character. Good in that he stuck to his long-held belief that Hanratty was innocent. Bad in that he persisted with this belief in the face of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

The DNA investigation was initially instigated in 1995 at the request of the Hanratty family solicitors. Its ultimate conclusions in 2001 were that on both exhibits examined only one male DNA profile could be identified, which was of Hanratty. If the exhibits had been contaminated then the DNA profile of the murderer would still have been detected. If Hanratty were not the murderer then there would have been two profiles, one from the contamination from Hanratty and one from the murderer.

To protest the innocence of Hanratty has the effect of saying that Valerie Storie's evidence convicted an innocent man. As a matter of justice to Valerie Storie, Paul Foot should have accepted the 2002 court of appeal decision that Hanratty was guilty.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID PORTER,

Macclesfield.

Lack of control

Sir,

Your article outlining the use of phage-therapy in eastern Europe was indeed interesting. However, its dismissal by Britain's "health chiefs" as being "useful but disappointing" is far from glib.

Even in these dumbed-down days, any pre-GCSE schoolboy can explain the necessity of including a control in any experiment or trial and why any trial or experiment conducted without a control is thoroughly worthless.

Slight regards,
JONATHAN EWER BSc (Hons),

Via email.

Party invite

Sir,

With the party conference season looming I started recalling past speeches, backdrops, locations, etc, but cannot seem to picture any typical attendees. I therefore wonder if you might have something in your archive which could assist?

Yours,
MIKE ASHWORTH,

Via email.

From the Gnome Archive

In the stocks

Sir,

I refer to the Stock Horror column on page 29 of Eye 1114. It states that shares to the value of £117m were sold by directors Dan David and Francis Wahl in January (and that these shares are valued at £85m today). That statement is incorrect. Almost three-quarters of the shares were sold by The Dan David Foundation, a charity, in which Dan David had a non-beneficial interest. Beneficially, Dan David bought – not sold – 2m shares at a cost of £2.6m.

Regards,
CHARLES PONSONBY,

Via email.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"England have the best fans in the world and Scotland's fans are second to none."
KEVIN KEEGAN
(Omar Shafi)

"And the three of them are single-handedly pulling Australia apart."
BBC Olympic Hockey
(Andy Burnett)

"And Obikwelu... walking round with his shoulders on his hips..."
JOHN RAWLING, Radio 5 Live
(Juliet Patterson)

"Muslims were literally glued to their televisions..."
Caller, Radio 5 Live
(Steve Mann)

"So for Linford Christie to get the job he'll have to prove whiter than white..."
VICTORIA DERBYSHIRE, Radio 5 Live
(James Crosby)

Good Day

Sir,

Re: Biggles Fills His Pockets ("Jobs for the Boys", Eye 1112). It is outrageous to level charges of sleaze at retiring Air Chief Marshall Sir John Day following his acceptance of an advisory post with BAE Systems.

Such a move is only a just reward for this fine officer's long and illustrious career. In his new role, Sir John can only be expected to display the integrity and good judgement that he was well known for among all ranks in the RAF. For, who can forget his courageous decision to declare the dead pilots of the Mull of Kintyre crash Chinook as grossly negligent, even though the board of inquiry slavishly stuck to procedure in finding that there was no clear evidence as to the cause of the disaster?

Linked to this case is his earlier, even wiser, move to force this new version of the Chinook into service despite fears expressed by test pilots as to the safety of the newly-fitted FADEC engine control system. The fact that some have subsequently tried to suggest that FADEC could have been a major factor in the loss of the Chinook is merely a small-minded attempt to slur this fine officer's name. I can only wish Sir John good luck in his new venture.

Yours sincerely,
B. F. NUCKELL
(Squadron Leader, Ret'd),

Wooler, Northumberland.

Beyond our Ken

Sir,

A pedant writes: Red Metcalfe, copper agonistes in the Messiah franchise, is not played by Ken Bones. He is played by Ken Stott. Mr Stott may be hacked off.

Regards,
VIV CROOT,

Via email.

At sixes and sevenths

Sir,

Maths is clearly not Muckspreader's strong suit (see Down on the Farm, Eye 1114). A fall from 92m to 76m, is not "more than a fifth". The fall of 16m is more than a fifth of 76m, but the fall must be measured as a proportion of the original figure (92m in this case), so although a rise from 76m to 92m would be a change of over a fifth, the fall in question was actually just over a sixth.

Yours divisively,
DAVE WARD,

Norwich.

Blasted Heath

Sir,

While hating to appear pedantic, I feel that I must point out the mistake in the Heath cartoon in issue 1114. The character swinging the TV around his head was imitating the hammer, not the shot put, as indicated. And yes, I did watch too much of the Olympics.

Yours sincerely,
KAREN PRICE,

King's Bognor, W. Sussex.

Black mark

Sir,

Re: Going Live (Eye 1114). At which Olympics and at what event did Roger Black win a gold medal? I think we should be told.

Yours etc,
PHIL EDGAR,

Wigan, Lancs.

● *Quite right. Despite winning a number of gold medals at European and world championships, Roger Black only achieved silver at the Olympics. Ed.*

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

MORE on Dougal Watt, the whistleblower who revealed nepotism and misconduct within the European court of auditors, only to be sacked from his job there and be accused by his opponents of being a "Walter Mitty" figure. In his latest run in with a European institution, Mr Watt has again been shown to be right – and EU officials to be very wrong indeed.

Following his sacking Mr Watt has discovered that the financial controller of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Patrick Klaedtke, also sits on the board of five private companies – a potentially huge conflict of interest. The EIB, whose directors include British chancellor Gordon Brown, funds development projects across Europe and the world, lending money at preferential rates to many private businesses.

Britain provides £23bn – about a sixth – of the its funds; and the bank's regulations clearly state that staff "shall not hold a seat on any board of directors or any management committee".

Watt first tipped off the *International Herald Tribune* about the story and its reporter, Doreen Carvajal, asked the EIB why its financial controller held these directorships. The EIB replied firmly that he didn't and that the allegation was untrue.

Carvajal then sent the EIB copies of the entries in the Luxemburg business register, obtained by Mr Watt, that showed the directorships. The bank responded that this must be a case of "identity theft". The reporter then rang another director named in the documents, who confirmed that the EIB's financial controller was a long-time friend who had joined his company boards as a personal favour.

Faced with this evidence the EIB finally admitted the appointments, claiming that Klaedtke had had an "old oral agreement" with his friend about the boards that had "slipped his mind" and that he had not actually attended any board meetings. Arguably, agreeing to be a name on a company board without actually attending meetings is more reckless than moonlighting for the firms. But the EIB told *Private Eye* it had not disciplined Mr Klaedtke who, unlike Dougal Watt, remains unsacked.

The EIB's lax attitude may be due to the way its own board members have other, usually undeclared, interests. Unlike other financial institutions, the EIB does not disclose the backgrounds or voting of its board. But the EIB loaned Air France £67m to buy aeroplanes while an Air France board member was a director of the bank. The Italian enterprise Instituto Treccani received a £14m loan to publish encyclopaedias when one of its board members was an EIB director. Barry Ireton, chairman of Konkola Copper Mines, was a director of the EIB when it approved a £23m loan to a Zambian copper mine. Ireton's firm, Konkola, and the mine that benefited from the loan are part owned by ZCCM.

MEPs can hold the EIB up to scrutiny, and one of their number, Spain's Monica Ridruejo, drew up a report savaging its practices. However, fellow MEPs amended her report until it became a song of praise for the bank – so much so that Ridruejo, a former banker, removed her name from her own report.

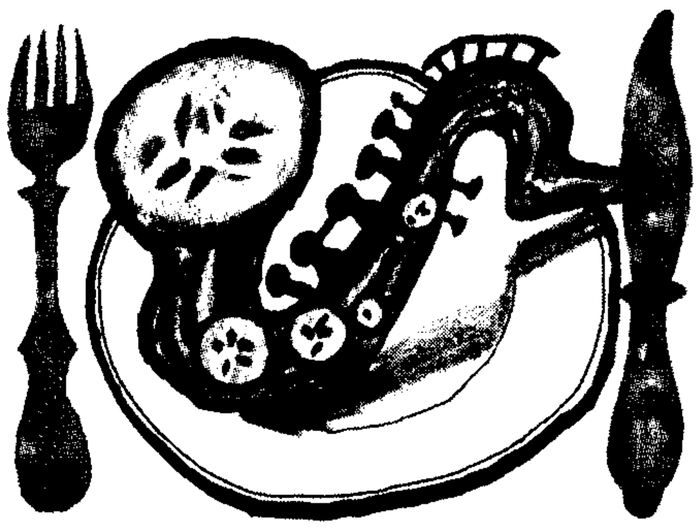
Coincidentally, the EIB gives unexplained support to the MEPs' own private pension scheme. This is a private business set up by the MEPs rather than an official pension fund. But an EIB official has a place on the pension fund board – one Jean-Philippe Birckel, an assistant to the EIB's director of human resources – who offers valuable management time. The EIB told the *Eye* there was no "conflict of interest" in helping MEPs run their private pension fund when those same MEPs were supposed to be scrutinising the bank because "the bank has no commercial link with the fund". Apparently, the EIB does not believe giving staff time and expertise free of charge are a "commercial link".

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "We use forty kilograms of finely-tuned marrows, potatoes, and peppers at each of our recitals, and they're always fresh," Matthias Meinharter explained to Hamburg music-lovers who attended a concert given by the Viennese Vegetable Orchestra. "Here is a pumpkin that's been converted into a double bass, and this is a cuke-o-phon, which is a saxophone carved out of a cucumber. Over there is a carrot flute and a radish marimba, and I myself play a violin made from leeks.

"We carve all the instruments ourselves, and find that non-organic vegetables make better



instruments than organic ones. Because size, firmness, water content, and texture are all vital to achieving a proper sound, we create them only an hour or so before each concert. This cuke-o-phon, for example, has a bore hole drilled lengthwise through the cucumber, and finger holes carved on the outside, with a reed and mouthpiece fitted to the end. In my opinion, it sounds better than many real saxophones. After the concert, we make soup out of the instruments, so that we and the audience can enjoy them a second time. So next time you hear someone say 'don't play with your food,' try not to take them too seriously." *(Viet Nam News, 30/5/04. Spotter: Robert Mitchell)*

– ● –

● *"It's ridiculous," Barry Adams told reporters outside his Yamba Pawnbrokers and Second Hand Goods store in North Coast, New South Wales. "It must be just a few prudes who are causing the trouble. Most people around here have got plenty of laughs out of the Ugly Man of Yamba, and don't find him offensive at all. We have a naked lady out the front of my other shop, and no-one's complained about her breasts. What next? Will they start banning nudes from the local art gallery?"*

Adams was speaking after Clarence Valley Council had ordered him to shorten the phallus of the Balinese fertility woodcarving outside his shop. "I put the Ugly Man there seven years ago, and nobody ever objected to him, until last month. But then a man from the council came with a tape measure, said there had been complaints, and told me that the tip of the statue's erect penis intrudes several centimetres onto council land, thereby causing an obstruction to the footpath. It's true that the Ugly Man's phallus is enormous, it's bloody huge, almost a metre long. It's a biggy. But that's why people notice it, and stop to have their photo taken with him. Now I suppose I'll have to take a knife and lop a bit off him. Apparently, Picasso used to encounter this sort of problem with the authorities too." (ABC News [Australia], 9/7/04. Spotter: Anon)

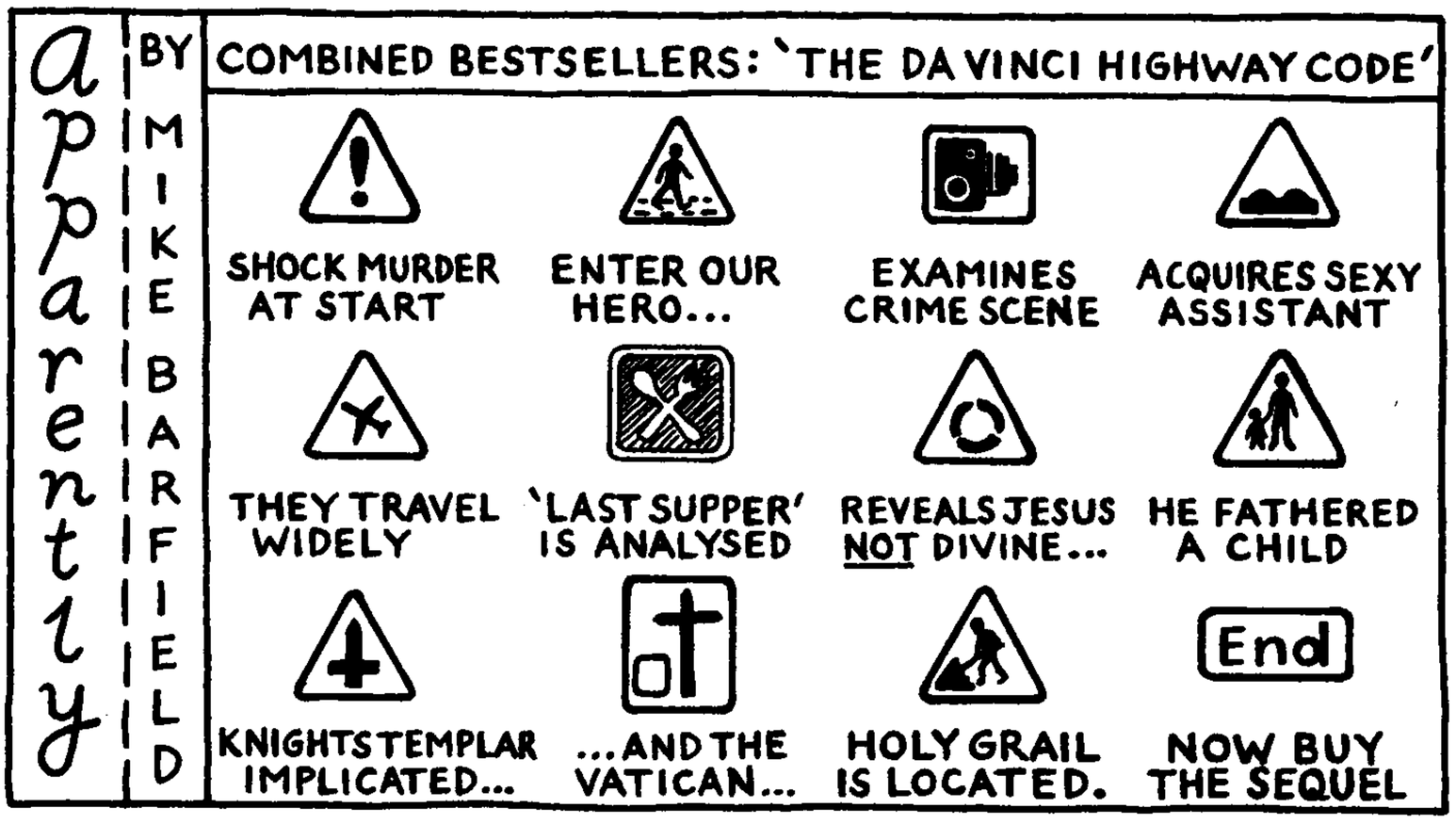
– ● –

● Sir, Where has the decency in modern women gone? At 9.55pm on Monday July 5th, at Chalfont and Latimer station, I was about to come up from the subway to get the Chesham shuttle when I was greeted by the unwelcome sight of a bare female bottom being flashed at the top of the stairs. It belonged to a smartly-dressed, grey-haired woman of between 50 and 55. She had put down her shopping bags, dropped her knickers, and was bent over, waggling her bare backside. It was not a pretty sight and, far from being amused, I was disgusted.

What do you do under those circumstances? I spoke to her angrily. "Oh no", I said, "do us a favour," and hurried past, not wanting to get involved. "I can't help it," she replied lamely, in a girlish voice.

When I got home, I rang the police. There were other people following me, some of whom may have seen her too. She may appear again, and clearly needs help to stop. In case she is among your readers, I would like to say this to her, if she will listen:

"Please lady, where is your dignity? What you are doing is not rational or attractive and is offensive. Self-esteem and winning friends is not achieved by that kind of behaviour, as I'm sure you know. You could end up in court with the shame and disgrace that would bring on yourself and your family and friends. You could get attacked, or worse, and you wouldn't like that. Please consider yourself and others. Seek advice from your GP or someone quickly. They won't make fun of you, and I am sure they can help." Name and address supplied. *(Buckinghamshire Examiner, 15/7/04. Spotter: Mark David)*



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

Let me say straightaway that I have come back from my holidays firing on all cylinders and with my batteries fully recharged!

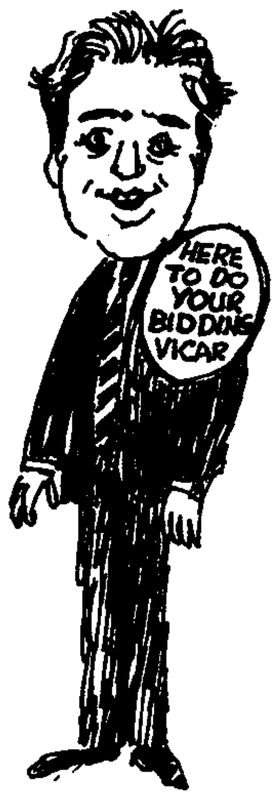
And, hey, don't we all feel the same sense of excitement, as we leave behind those long langorous weeks of lounging around Mr Berlusconi's pool and my good friend Cliff's private beach, and brace ourselves for all the challenges that autumn brings!

The kids are back at school. Everyone's back at work. There's a bracing nip in the air.

It's time for new ideas and new projects, and I can tell you, I've got plenty of them!

As my good friend the Rev Dubya might put it, in his typical Texan way, "Hey, bud, let's go kick some ass!"

And there's no more visible sign that the parish is now moving into a new era than my decision to welcome back an old friend onto the PCC as my new right-hand man!



So, let's hear it for Mr Milburn! Stand up, Alan, so that the congregation can all remind themselves who you are!

As you all remember, only a year ago Alan came to me very regretfully, saying, "I'm sorry, Tony, to let you down badly, just when you needed me, but I've decided to put my family first, instead of my duty to the parish".

Of course, I was very understanding of Alan's dilemma. "I am a family man myself," I told him (although, unlike Mr Milburn, I am actually married!).

"No one understands better than me," I went on, "how difficult it is to combine working round the clock for our parish community with being a father and husband (or, in Mr Milburn's case, 'partner').

"But some of us," I had to tell him, "put the interests and needs of our fellow men and women first."

He, however, made a different choice, which he was perfectly entitled to do, even though he was wrong!

And at this point I wonder if any of the children remember the story of the so-called prodigal son?

Rashid? Vijay? No, well let me fill you in!

There was once a very foolish young man who decided to leave his best friend, to whom he owed everything, and travel far away into another land, to spend more time with his family.

And it didn't do him any good at all! He was very unhappy, far away from the centre

of power, just moping around all day, watching afternoon TV and eating pork pies.

And then one day, it suddenly struck him that he was wasting his life, and that he needed to return to his friend and seek forgiveness.

Well, you can imagine how his friend might have felt when he saw the prodigal coming up the vicarage path and asking for his job back.

I can tell you that some people in that situation would have been very angry and told him in no uncertain terms to get lost!

But this friend (let's call him 'Tony'!) was not like that at all. He was full of compassion and fell upon the neck of his former colleague (not literally, of course – although there would be nothing wrong with that if it *had* been literally! We're a broad church, as Mr Mandelson and his partner Reinaldo would be the first to testify!).

No, this friend welcomed back the prodigal, saying to him, "Glad to have you back, Alan. You're just the man I need to help me with my new modernising initiatives. Bring that carrier bag of pork pies into the kitchen and we'll celebrate with a feast!"

But that's not the end of the story, is it, children? (Wake up, Rashid!)

No, there's another character, isn't there, whom we haven't mentioned so far, who's very important to the story (though not as important as he thinks he is!).

And that's the prodigal's older colleague who has stayed with the vicar, working dutifully night and day at his accounts!

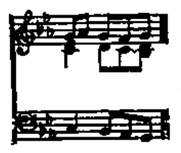
When he sees the welcome given to the prodigal, he is furious.

"I've been loyal to you all these years, and yet I've never been given any pork pies or invited to a slap-up feast in the vicarage kitchen. This isn't fair!"

Now it was the vicar's turn to get angry! "You misunderstood everything, Gordon," he replied.

"Don't you know that there is more rejoicing in the vicarage when one of our disciples returns to the fold than there is when all the other gloomy Scottish sheep sit around muttering and moaning about how it is time for the shepherd to resign."

That's a 'parable', isn't it (a word we get from the Greek 'para', a load of, and 'ballos', wisdom).

I hope that'll give you all something to think about before our 'Service of Rededication' next week, for which, incidentally, I have written a special new chorus.

Welcome home, welcome back,
Now we're really back on track.
(Repeat)
Alan-lulia, Alan-lulia.

© Words and music, T. Blair.

Yours up for it! Tony

Who's Who

The first in a series of one.

First Lady of The Parish
by Mary Ann Sieghart

I'd like you all to meet a very wonderful lady! She is not only a wonderful wife and mother, she is also the most successful career woman in the country, in her own right. She is ravishingly beautiful, dresses like a fashion model, with incredibly good taste, and does more for charity than Bob Geldof and mother Theresa put together. Her vitality and charm enrich everyone who is privileged enough to meet her, whether it is in her exclusive Chambers, helping the under-privileged with their legal problems, or pouring out the coffee at the end of one of our morning services. And who is this saintly heroine of our time, with whom we are all profoundly honoured to breathe the same air. I am referring of course to Cherie Booth Q.C., our vicar's wife! *Mary Ann Seekjob*

Yale

Goodbye to Mr Smith, who has sadly had to resign from the PCC for "personal reasons". It would be inappropriate to spell out here what those "personal reasons" might be, but the fact that Mr Smith was about to be sacked must have preyed heavily on his mind, possibly leading him to become severely depressed and in urgent need of professional psychiatric help. We'd like to thank Alan for whatever it was he did, (although I gather he left quite a bit to be desired in the way he carried out his work!). We wish him all luck for the future, and a speedy recovery from his tragic breakdown! T.B.

Parish Postbag

Dear Sir

In reply to the vicar's request to be supplied with more detailed information about the parish accounts, may I remind you that I am a busy man and I don't have time to give valuable data to financial illiterates like the vicar who

Yours faithfully
Gordon Brown
Parish Treasurer and Vicar-in-waiting

The vicar regrets that some letters may have to be cut for reasons of space, as might some jobs such as Parish Treasurer, if people don't watch out. T.B.

WHAT YOU WON'T READ

THE GOLDFISH BOWL

EXCLUSIVE extracts from Cherie Blair's sensational behind-the-scenes bestseller about life in Number Ten Downing Street. Only in the Daily Cheriegraph!

Chapter One

Mrs Pitt The Younger

PITT THE Younger was a young dynamic politician who launched a courageous war against the tyrant Napoleon whom he believed was a threat to world peace and who possessed weapons of mass destruction (canon).

However, Pitt would never have been any good without the lifelong support of his wife Lady Cherina Pitt, the daughter of a poor, travelling player who, through her own abilities, rose to become the most powerful woman of her generation. She was also the first to install a water-closet in the upstairs bedroom of Number Ten Downing Street, which is still used today.

Chapter Two

Mrs Disraeli *(otherwise known as Queen Victoria).*

WITH HIS flamboyant waistcoats and exuberant oratory, 'Dizzy' Disraeli, as he was known, was most famous for being married to his wife Princess Cheriana, without whom he would not have been any good. Cheriana was also a celebrated cook who put the first Aga into the Number Ten kitchen.

Chapter Three

Lady Cheruntine Churchill

WINSTON CHURCHILL is known as the second greatest war leader in British History. Alone of the entire nation, he foresaw the threat of an evil dictator with a moustache. However, even he would not have been any good without his colourful consort, the beautiful and intelligent Lady Cheruntine, who stood by him through all his triumphs and tried to persuade him to give up smoking cigars in the bath (which she was the first to have installed).

Chapter Four

Mrs Cheryl Heath

Edward Heath was thought by many to have been a bachelor, but in fact our research has shown that he would never have been any good, had it not been for his secret wife and lifelong companion Mrs Cheryl Heath, the daughter of a Broadstairs Punch and Judy man.

It was she who introduced him to music and sailing and urged him to take Britain into the Common Market. She installed the first cinema organ in the Number Ten lounge.

Chapter Five

Mrs Norman Major

John Major would never have been *(That's enough wives. Ed.)*

© 2004, Mrs Cherie Booth and Lady Melvyna Barg.

GLENDA SLAGG

IT'S HURRICANE GLENDA! SHE'LL BLOW YOU AWAY!?!

■ **JOHN MORTIMER!?! Now I've heard it all!?!? Randy old Rumpole had Britian's favourite Mum up the duff forty years ago!?!? What a disgrace!?**

Oi, Rumpy-Pumpole – couldn't you keep your briefs on (Geddit?!?!) for five minutes?!?! And what about the poor little nipper who for all those years never knew his dear old dad who was guzzling champagne with his showbiz pals down at the Ivy!?! Justice?! Don't make me laugh!! My verdict on you, Sir John Nortiboy (Geddit?!) is that you should be strung up!?!?

■ THREE CHEERS for Sir John!?! What a heartwarming story for dear old Rumpole, in the autumn of his days, to find out he's a dad at 97!?!? And who's the lucky gal?! Wonderful Wendy Craig – the nation's number-one Mum?!? 'Scuse me, Mister, I'm just goin' to shed a tear!?!?

■ **HATS OFF to Lauren Bacall for telling it like it is and putting Nicole Kidman in her place!?! It needed saying – and who better to say it than the Screen Goddess herself, the Legendary Legend that is Legend Bacall?!?!? Say it again, Sam (Geddit?!)**

■ LAUREN BACALL!?!? What a rude old bag!?! How dare this shrivelled old prune cast aspersions on the Gorgeous Goddess of the Screen Nicole Kidman!?! Play it again, Sad (Geddit?!?)

■ HERE THEY ARE – Glenda's Conference Season Cuddlies:

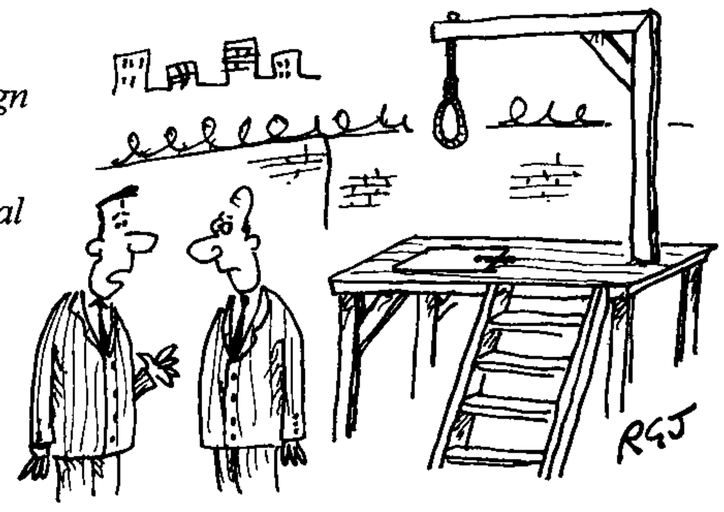
● **Alan Milburn** – OK, I haven't got a family to spend more time with, but why don't we start one, Big Boy!?!

● **Parkinson** – TV's Comeback Kid. You may have switched channels, but you still turn this gal on?!? Why don't you come round and suck up to me!??!

● **Muqtada al-Sadr** – Crazy name, *seriously* crazy guy!!!?!?

Byeeee!!!

"This is the only design for a paedophile treatment centre that was acceptable to local residents"



A selection of amazing statistics from Graydon Carter's new book 'Why I hate Bush like everyone else' (No. 578 on the Amazon "Best Book About George Bush Published This Week" list).

CARTER IN NUMBERS

12 Number of inches that should be cut off Graydon's silly hair.

56 Size of Graydon Carter's waist (in inches) after lunch.

1m Size of Graydon Carter's salary in dollars at *'Suits You'* magazine, New York.

8 Number of wives married to Graydon Carter (so far).

7m number of boring articles about Hollywood stars printed in *'Suits You'* this month.

1 Number of books by Graydon Carter sold this week. (Purchased with an I.O.U. by Mr C. Silvester)

94 Number of sycophantic pieces about Graydon Carter appearing this week by hacks who want a job on *'Suits You'*.

THE SHAME OF LORD AND LADY BLACK

by Phil Boots

THE DISGRACEFUL behaviour of the former proprietor of the Daily Telegraph and his wife, Barbara Amielticket, has shocked the entire newspaper industry.

The spectacle of a proprietor fiddling his expenses, rather than a journalist, has appalled every member of the fourth estate.

This display of naked greed has, however, raised important questions for every self-respecting journalist. How come we didn't line our pockets instead of them? We should all hang our heads in shame and resign immediately.

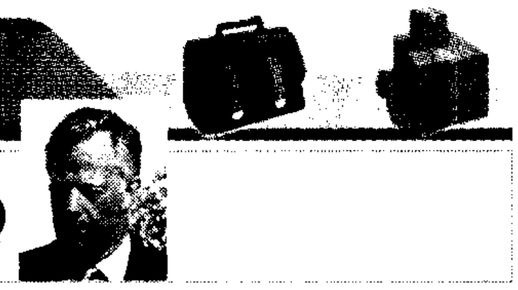
© Phil Boots 2004.

MEMO TO EDITOR

Expenses incurred by Phil Boots in connection with writing above piece:

- 1st Class air ticket to New York for research purposes **£15,982**
- Set of Louis Vuitton luggage for above trip **£11,374**
- Jogging suit for chasing story **$250**
- Purchase of Rolls Royce to transport story to news-room **£137,000**
- Party to celebrate 50th word written about Lady Black **£13,489**
- Copy of Lord Black's book on President Roosevelt from remainder shop **96p**

My eBay



bluehawkleader-sirmarkt-ssh! (10)

Items I'm Bidding On (1-3 of 3 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐ **'U.S. Divorce Procedure – A Layman's Guide' – Vols 1-8, pbk edn**	£29.99	£10.00	2
☐ **Wrist compass (needs slight attention)**	£2.99	£1.50	1
☐ **Fun! Bumper Disguise Kit – wig, beard, moustache – fool your friends!**	£14.99	£3.00	1

Items I'm Selling (1-3 of 3 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐ **Cape Town mansion, 8 bdrms, safari lounge, thatched gazebo – genuine reason for sale**	£2,000,000	n/a	0
☐ **Men's khaki military-style shirt, plus camouflage jacket – (medium) – new, never worn**	£10.00 the pair	£7.50	0
☐ **'The Wild Geese'/'Wild Geese 2' – VHS double feature – good cond.**	£4.99	£2.50	0

That All-Purpose Football Editorial In Full

ENGLAND's pathetic/inspired performance last night has left manager Sven-Goran Eriksson/Sven-Moron Gonowson with only one option – resign, you bastard/please accept a knighthood. Your decision to give the hardworking and loyal/fat and lazy David Beckham the captaincy has turned out to be a complete disaster/tactical masterstroke.

And now it is perfectly clear that the proud England team/bunch of losers will go all the way to win the World Cup/will not even qualify for the World Cup.

So we say, *'Sod/Hats off to Sven'*!

ROY of the ROVERPAIDS
ROY AND HIS FELLOW ENGLAND PLAYERS ARE FURIOUS WITH THE PRESS FOR BEING RUDE ABOUT THEM
SO HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEATING POLAND LADS?
THAT'S THE MOST SENSIBLE THING THEY'VE EVER SAID!
ROY
BECKHAM
ROOPER.

Advertisement

JOIN THE ARMY

Have You Got What It Takes?

- ***Could you survive sexual abuse during training?***
- *Could you avoid committing suicide?*
- ***Could you then go to Iraq and be charged with murder if you haven't already been shot by the Americans?***
- *Could you face a lifetime in jail?*

If you think you've got what it takes to join the Modern Army then you are what we are looking for.

Your Country Needs You!

Daily Star

'HOWARD PROMOTES SEX-FIEND' SHOCK

■ by our Political Staff
RON GITT and DAVE DRUNK

■ AT LAST the Tories have woken up to what really interests the voters – ie sex, and lots of it!

That's why Mike Howard has brought in top sex-fiend John Redwood to add a bit of you-know-what to his front bench!

Mick has booted out all the dreary has-beens of yesteryear and brought in "Randy Redwood", the "Shagmeister" himself!

If the new Shadow "Sexetary" of State can get out of bed with gorgeous, pouting, ex-model Nikki Page-Three for five minutes, then he could be just the man to put the "Phwoary" party back on the map.

Reddy for Anything!

Thank goodness Mick has had the sense to put sex back at the top of the agenda, by promoting this Superstud from Outer Space to the "Shagow" Cabinet!

ON OTHER PAGES

"I am delighted to be appointed to the deregulation portfolio" says six-times-a-night Mr Superbonk!!!

© Desmondtrash Enterprises

Daily Mail

What's Wrong With Falling Leaves?

Asks The World's Worst Columnist Max Hastings

WHAT a silly fuss some people make at this time of year over leaves falling off trees.

They complain that our streets are clogged up, that our entire train network grinds to a halt, and that even the Diana Memorial Fountain ceases to operate because of excess leaves.

Talk about moaning minnies!

Falling leaves are as much a part of our British way of life as buttered toast, chicken tikka masala and the Queen Mother!

I for one am not ashamed to stand up and be counted when it comes to the Great Leaves Debate!

There's nothing finer, in my humble opinion, than the crunch of freshly fallen leaves under one's Wellingtons, as one heads off with one's dog for a day's shooting or fishing.

What would the politically correct health - and - safety - mad brigade suggest that we should do with all the leaves that nature has so bountifully showered upon us?

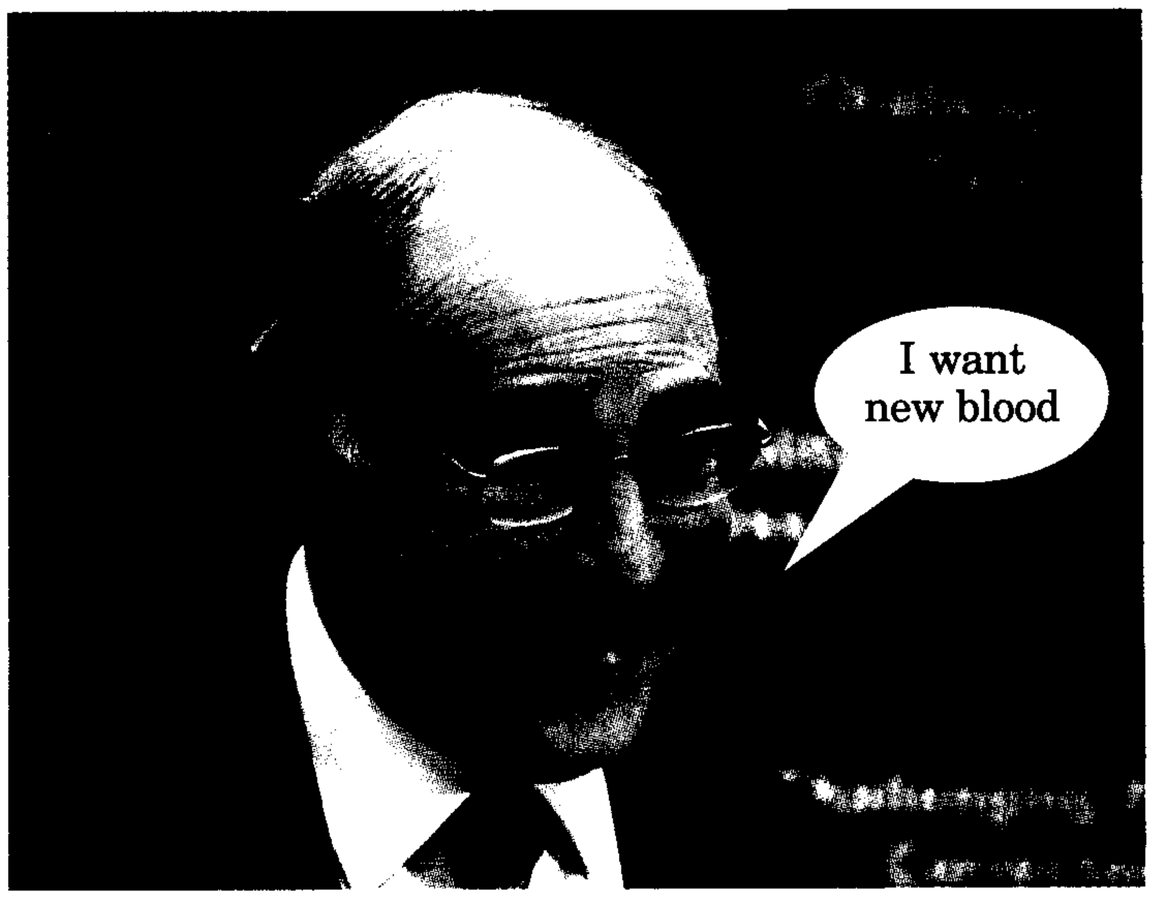
Sweep them up in a pooper-scooper and send them off to the Third World for starving peasants to turn them into sandals? Whose daft idea was that? *(Yours. Ed.)*

No. I say leave our leaves alone. They never did harm to anyone, and they are a damn sight better than covering the whole country in concrete, which is what Mr Prescott would prefer us to walk on.

© Hastingstrash Columnar Services

NEXT WEEK: Max Hastings on "What have people got against breakfast?"

TORY RESHUFFLE



Continuing The Sensational Serialisation Of The **Andrew Marr** Story

CHAPTER 94

Why no one read the Independent when I was editor

WHEN I met the Deputy Night Features Chief on that Friday by the water-cooler in the open-plan office at Canary Wharf to discuss the redesign of the local government pages and the positioning of the cross-word, it was clear for some reason that nobody was reading the z-z-z-z-z

© Andrew No-marr-please.

POETRY CORNER

Lines In Correction Of My Last Poem 'In Memory of Elmer Bernstein, Composer Of The Magnificent Seven Theme'

So. I am sorry then.
Due to an uncharacteristic
Slip of memory
I inadvertently
Named James Garner
As one of the
Magnificent Seven.

He was not.

I also omitted the late
Charles Bronson and
Brad Dexter (who
Is usually the one
No one can
Remember).

I hope this did not mar
Your appreciation
Of the poem.

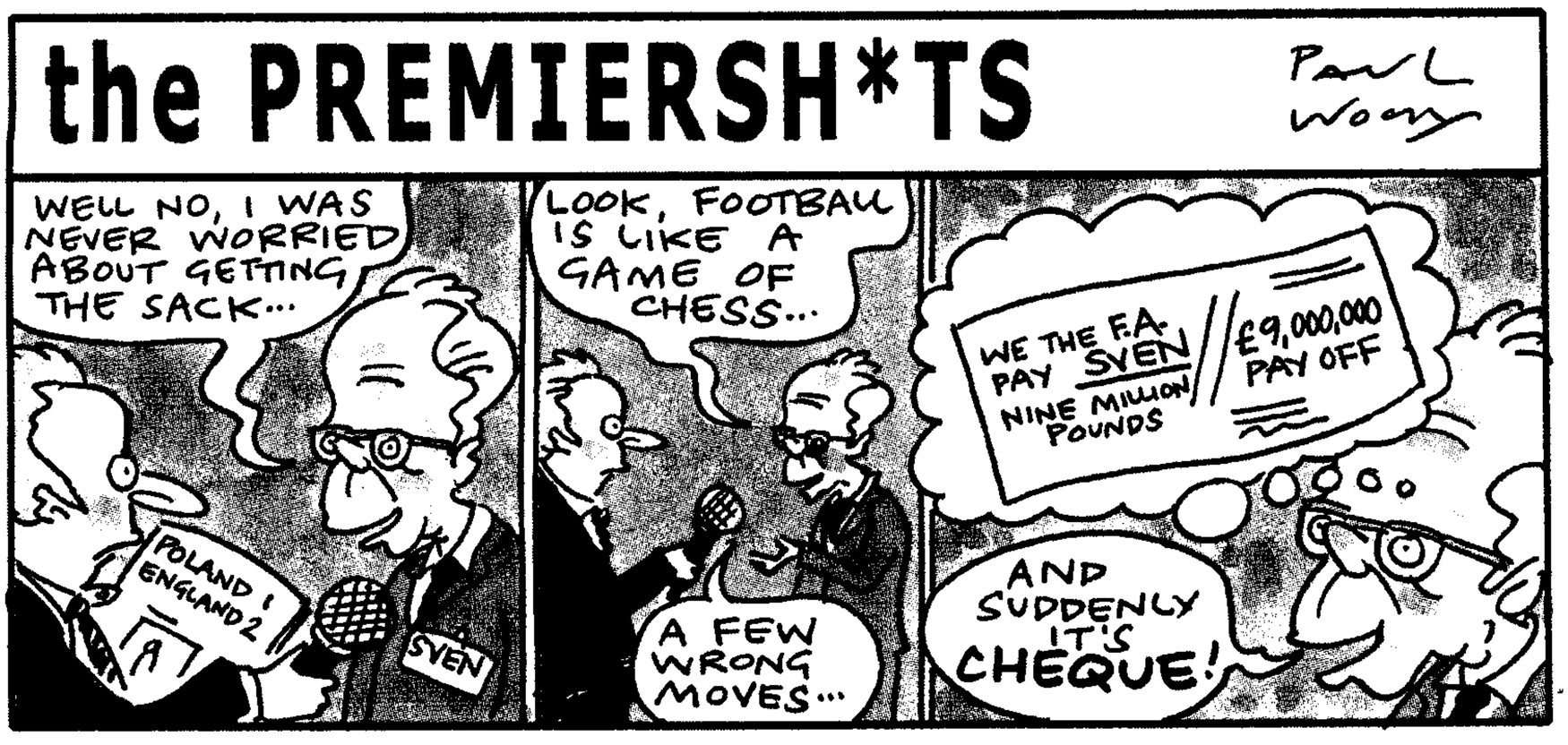
As compensation for
My error I would like
To repeat
The theme tune.

All together now
Dum. Di-da-da-dum
Dum. Di-da-da-dum

Then

Da-da
Di-da-DA-da…

E.J. Thribb
(The Magnificent 17½)


the PREMIERSH*TS
Paul Woolley
WELL NO, I WAS NEVER WORRIED ABOUT GETTING THE SACK...
POLAND 1 ENGLAND 2
SVEN
LOOK, FOOTBALL IS LIKE A GAME OF CHESS...
A FEW WRONG MOVES...
WE THE F.A. PAY SVEN NINE MILLION POUNDS
£9,000,000 PAY OFF
AND SUDDENLY IT'S CHEQUE!

MAN NO ONE HAS HEARD OF LEAVES JOB

by Our Political Staff **Hugh Hee**

A MAN no one has heard of today left his job in the Cabinet. *(Reuters)*

- **Who is he, the man no one has heard of?** *We don't know.*
- **Who will replace the man no one has heard of?** *Someone we don't know much about.* (That's enough. Ed.)

A Psychiatrist Writes

AS A psychiatrist, I often ask myself, "Do I want my partner hanging around at home all day, pretending to take an interest in his children, when as a psychiatrist I can see perfectly well that his strongest motivation is to get back into the Cabinet so that he can be on television and have civil servants and journalists fawning over him so that he is the centre of attention?" Such behaviour is only too typical of the male sex in general and my husband in particular, and the only cure is for us women to allow them to act out their infantile fantasies and thus get them out of the house. If you resent your partner wanting to "spend

more time with his family", you should seek professional counselling from a trained psychiatrist or contact WAHHAAH (Women Against Husbands Hanging Around At Home).

© Dr Ruth Briel

Alan Milburn's Responsibilities As The Chancellor Of The Duchy Of Lancaster In Full

1. Rub Gordon Brown's nose in it...

2. Er, that's it.

TOP DEMOCRAT IN BYPASS OPERATION

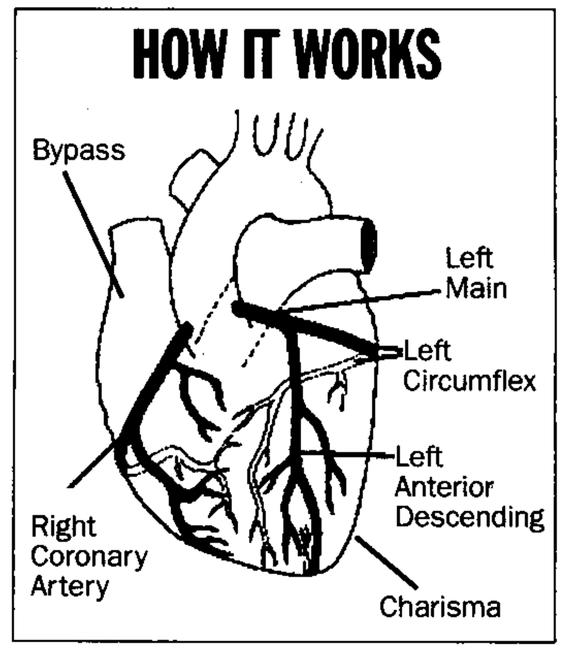
by Our Political Staff **Art A. Tack**

THE Democratic Party was on tenterhooks last night as it waited for the outcome of an emergency four-hour charisma bypass operation performed on Senator John Kerry.

Kerry, 56, had given democrats across the country severe palpitations as a result of his lacklustre performance on the hustings and many suffered heart attacks when his stance on the Iraq war backfired.

Pulse Not Racing

"We're in severe pain," said one leading member of the party. "We just hope and pray that this charisma by-pass operation is successful, otherwise we could be dead."



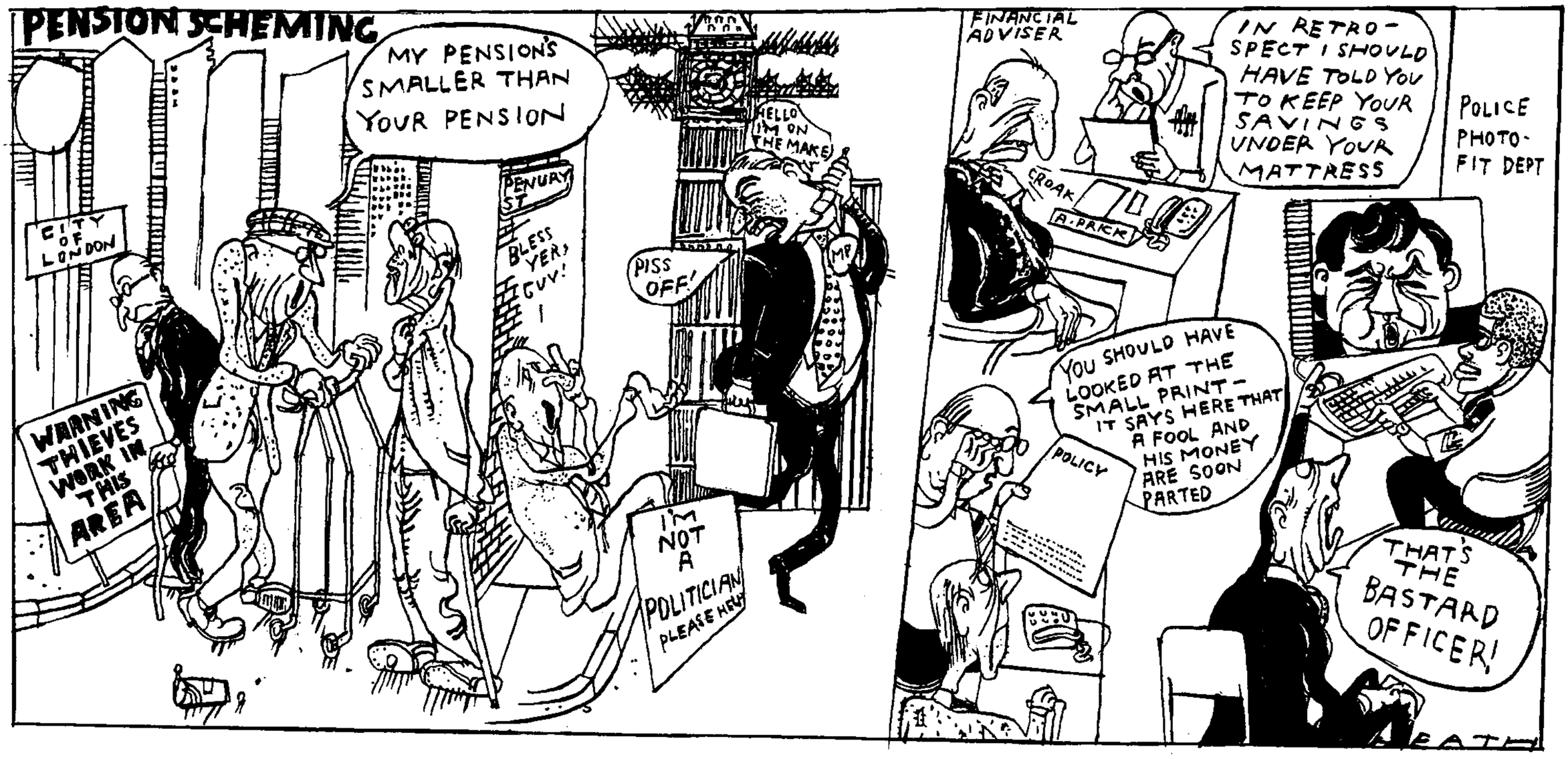
Bill Clinton is 120 over 70.

PUTIN PLEDGES TO CRUSH 'EVILDOERS'

by Our Russian Staff **R.A.S. Putin**

IN THE WAKE of the atrocity in Beslan, President Putin has appeared on State Television to reassure the Russian people that he will hunt down all the journalists who dared to go into print with criticisms of the botched military operation to secure the release of the hostages.

"My Special Forces will hunt down these evildoers in their newspaper lairs," the President informed the Russian viewers. "Already hundreds have been detained and thousands of potentially explosive articles criticising my leadership have been seized and destroyed."

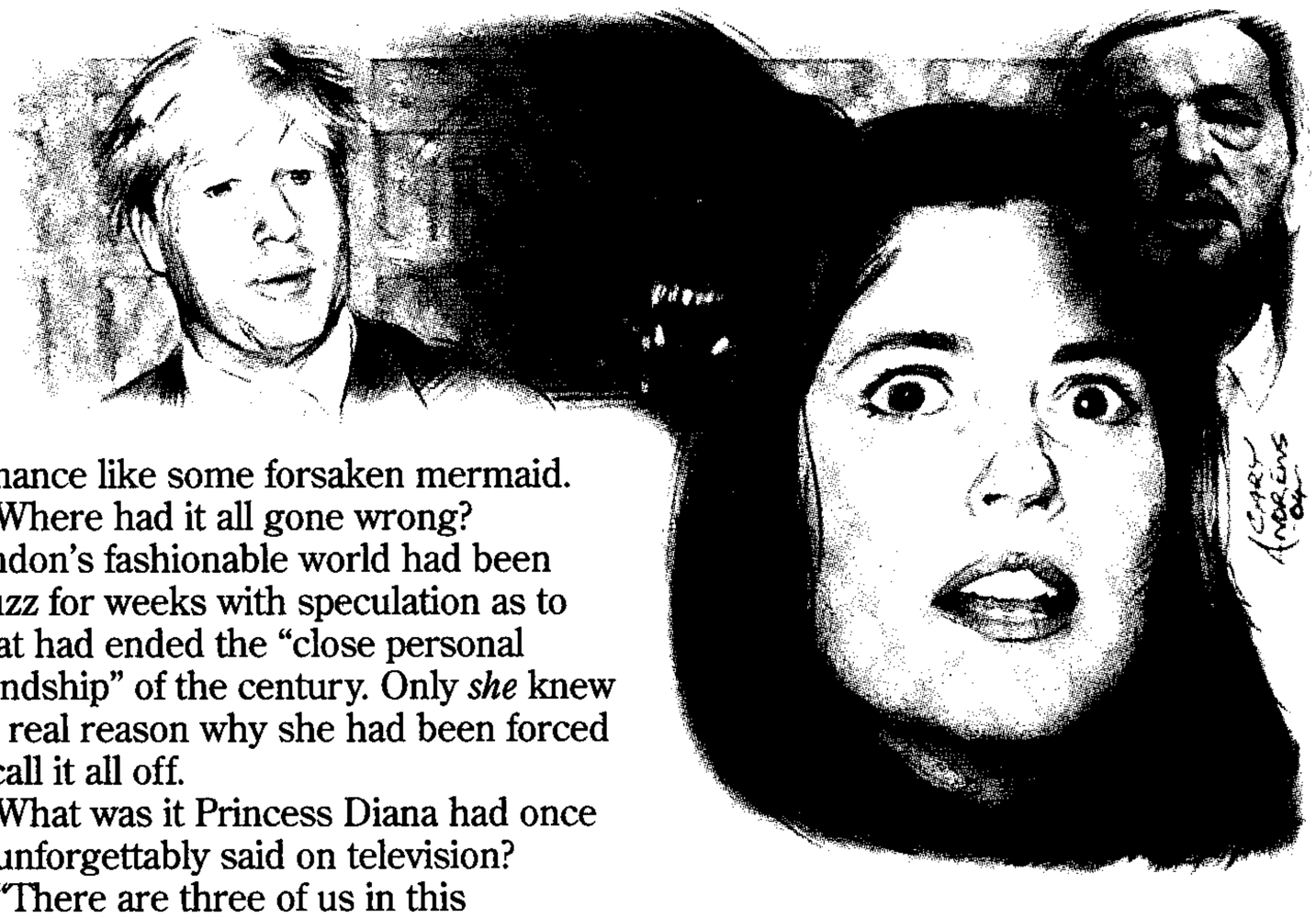

PENSION SCHEMING
MY PENSION'S SMALLER THAN YOUR PENSION
PENURY ST
HELLO I'M ON THE MAKE!
CITY OF LONDON
BLESS YER, GUV!
PISS OFF!
MP
WARNING THIEVES WORK IN THIS AREA
I'M NOT A POLITICIAN PLEASE HELP
FINANCIAL ADVISER
IN RETROSPECT I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU TO KEEP YOUR SAVINGS UNDER YOUR MATTRESS
CROAK
A. PARK
POLICE PHOTOFIT DEPT
YOU SHOULD HAVE LOOKED AT THE SMALL PRINT — IT SAYS HERE THAT A FOOL AND HIS MONEY ARE SOON PARTED
POLICY
THAT'S THE BASTARD OFFICER!
HEATH

Love Is Blind

The concluding chapter of the best-selling romance of the decade,
by DAME SYLVIE KRIN, author of *Never Too Old,*
Heir of Sorrows and *La Dame Aux Camillas*

THE STORY SO FAR: The love affair between Tiffany Cartier, a glamorous American heiress and publisher of the Spectator*, and David Blunkett, the saturnine, hirsute Home Secretary, has been the talk of the town.*

Now read on...



"CRIPES! Tiffany, the bubbly's running out. Be a sport and go and get another case, would you?"

The speaker was the legendary, tousle-haired editor of the *Spectator*, Boris Johnson, and he was addressing Tiffany in the midst of one of the magazine's famous lunches.

As Tiffany looked round the magazine's panelled dining room, she could see across the polished table all the brightest and wittiest young men in town. There was Simon Heffer in his orange wig. Ollie Letwin in his plus-fours. Mike Gove, widely tipped to be the next Tory leader but seven. Ed Heathcoat Amory, the fast-rising star of Paul Dacre's hotshot political team.

But she had failed to notice that they had already got through twelve bottles of the Hollinger 94, even before the first course had arrived.

Tiffany barely heard Boris's request as the thoughts of the beautiful and elegant publisher were far away from the brilliant badinage buzzing around her.

She was hardly even aware that the seat next to her was empty while its former occupant, the paper's assistant editor Rod Liddle, was busily engaged under the table, apparently looking for his napkin ring with the help of Arabella from the Subscription Renewals department.

None of this interested her. Tiffany's mind was in turmoil. Only one thing mattered. What had happened between her and David?

One minute they had been enjoying a love beyond her wildest dreams, a passion that transcended her everyday mundane world of cover mounts and *Spectator* golfing umbrella offers, to transport her into the heady world of power politics.

The next moment she was like a ship, dashed onto cruel rocks, leaving her clinging to the wreckage of her great romance like some forsaken mermaid.

Where had it all gone wrong? London's fashionable world had been abuzz for weeks with speculation as to what had ended the "close personal friendship" of the century. Only *she* knew the real reason why she had been forced to call it all off.

What was it Princess Diana had once so unforgettably said on television?

"There are three of us in this marriage..."

"THE trouble is, David, there are three of us in this relationship and that's one too many."

"You're being absurd, Tiffany," bristled the darkly handsome Home Secretary, using the same harsh tones as when he had launched his latest plans to serve Anti-Social Behaviour Orders on millions of young lager louts.

"You can't be jealous, can you?" he added.

Tiffany bridled. "But you take her everywhere," she protested. "Dinner, the theatre, even the House of Commons. She is with you every hour of the day and night. You're closer to her than you are to me."

There was a tense silence between them before Tiffany added a final recrimination, "And she doesn't even *like* me."

"Nonsense. She loves you," replied the slim, Sheffield-born author of the Criminal Justice Act 2002. "Look, she's wagging her tail. Just give her a pat and she'll soon be your friend."

"Grrr..." Hazel, the labrador, who had been lying quietly at her master's feet sprang suddenly to life and, with bared jaws, plunged her teeth into Tiffany's extended hand of friendship.

"Ow, no, get her off me!"

"Down, Hazel, down!" barked her master, in tones of stern command. "She only wants to protect me. It's what she's been trained for."

As he spoke, the slavering guide dog, eyes blazing with hatred, dug even deeper into Tiffany's delicate porcelain flesh.

When David finally managed to pull the dog off her, Tiffany was weeping hot tears of pain mingled with anger.

"That's it," she panted. "Either she goes or I go..."

"EITHER she goes or I go," joked Boris to his thirsty guests. "So it looks as though yours truly will have to go and sort out the booze!" Boris rose unsteadily from his chair and set off for the door – but as he went, he caught sight of Tiffany's bandaged arm.

"I say, old girl, you look as if you've been in the wars. What happened?"

"Oh, it was nothing, Boris," she replied. "Nothing at all."

Only she knew that it was very far from nothing which had caused fresh tears to spring unbidden to her limpid eyes.

No, it had really been SOMETHING between her and David, something incomparable, something utterly magical, something that few people can ever have known on this earth.

The End?

COMING SOON: Sylvie Krin's latest heartwarming royal romance, The Prince And The Duchess – The Affair That Never Was *(as not told to Gyles Brandreth)*

NEW WODEHOUSE BOOK DISCOVERED

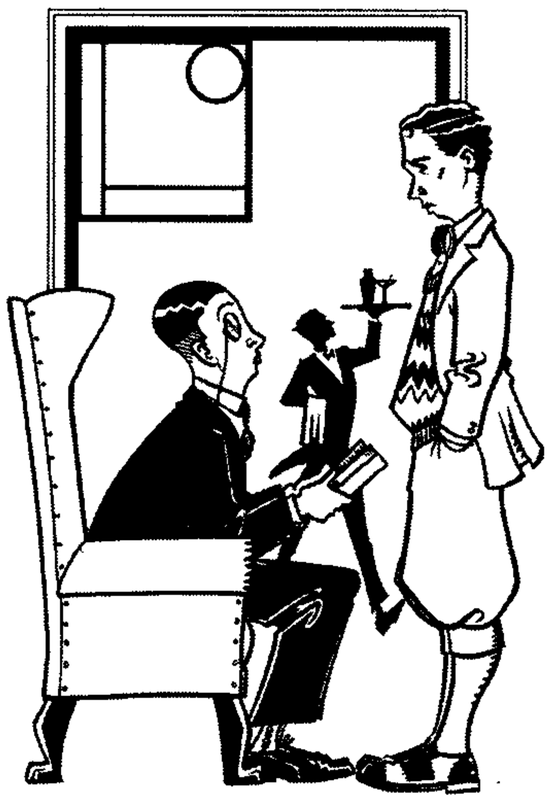
What Ho McCrummy!

by the late P.G. Wodehouse

AN AIR of post-prandial somnolence had settled over the smoking room of the Drones Club.

The only sound that could be heard was the faint snoring of the Hon Bertram Wooster, as he sat in a deep armchair with a copy of *P.G. Wodehouse* by Robert McCrum draped over his face.

The book fell to the floor with a clatter, prompting a fellow Drone, "Gussie" Fink-Nottle, to comment "I say, Bertie, what's that tome you're swotting up on? Looks deadly dull. Certainly seems to have knocked you out for the count."



Bertie struggled out of the embraces of Morpheus to defend his fellow Drone, "Crummy" McCrum, who had laboured long and hard to produce his master-piece at the expense of several innocent Swedish forests.

"No, Gussie, it's jolly interesting. It's all about some writer johnny, who not only wrote loads of books but followed his old school's cricket scores in the paper even when he was 85."

"Gussie" was unimpressed.

"Wodehouse, eh? Didn't he get mixed up with that German bean with the moustache?"

Bertie looked worried. "I haven't got to that bit yet. I'm only up to page 1. But I can tell you, it's pretty gripping stuff."

"Gussie" looked as convinced as a penguin who has been approached by an enterprising refrigerator salesman in the middle of the Antarctic wastes.

"Look, it must be good!" protested Bertie. "The bally *Observer*, no less, calls it tophole stuff, and gives it a massive spread."

AT THAT moment the head of "Barmy" Fotheringay-Phipps loomed up over his copy of the *Sporting Life*.

"Don't be such a chump, Bertie," he scoffed. "Friend McCrummy is the *Observer*'s books editor. That's why he plastered it all over his own pages calling it the book of the century."

"But what about the other papers then?" persisted Bertie. "Their book chaps all crack it up as well."

"That's because they're all chums of McCrummy's!" explained an exasperated "Barmy".

"I say, that's dashed clever of him," gasped the astounded Wooster, deeply impressed. "He must eat a lot of fish."

Cast In Full

Crummy McCrum ..... HUGH LAURIE
Bertie Woofter ..... STEPHEN FRY
Lord Ha Ha ..... P.G. WODEHOUSE

Late News

SHAKE-UP TO SCHOOL DAY ANNOUNCED

THE EDUCATION Secretary, Charles Clarke, has announced radical plans that would see primary schools teaching children to read and write between the hours of 9 and 4.

"Obviously we wouldn't want this 'teaching time' to interrupt the schools' key money-making role of providing early-morning nursery care from 5 a.m. and late-night after-school clubs until 11 pm," said the Education Secretary, "but we believe that there can still be some limited role in the new school day for teaching." *(cont'd p. 94)*

"He's off the hook"

HOWARD LATEST

MICHAEL HOWARD has rejected claims that he has taken the Tory Party even further to the right after he announced that Attila The Hun is to join the Shadow Cabinet as 'Shadow Minister for De-regulation'.

"This is palpable nonsense. Attila The Hun is well qualified for the job, having already deregulated vast swathes of Asia. If I'd really wanted to move the Party to the right I'd have done something barking mad like appointing John Redwood to the post, wouldn't I?" said the Tory *(cont'd p. 94)*

'BROWN BAITING' TO BE OUTLAWED

TONY BLAIR has denied reneging on his promise for a full ban on 'Brown Baiting' in the life of this Parliament.

"This is a barbaric and bloody spectacle that must be stopped," said one horrified Brownite. "The bloodlust on display in Tony's supporters' eyes as they whooped and hollered at the Prime Minister's announcement of Alan Milburn's return to the Cabinet was terrible to see." *(cont'd p. 94)*

THE HASBEANO
FEATURING BORIS THE MENACE
Blimey readers! I've written a book!!!
YIKES!
GO-ER
YAROO!!
Mi novel bi :* Boris
Er...how do you find the time with all your other jobs?
SNIFF!
READER'S VOICE
POO!
Simple! I don't DO any of them!!!
Smirk!!
Snigger!!
LORD BLACK
and his chums!
I say! Great fancy dress party Lord Black!
What fancy dress party?
So what crazy outfit will you wear next??!!!?
Amiel the Peril
Why do you need all those handbags Barbara?
To stuff all the LOOT in of course!!! (chortle chortle)

DIARY

GRAHAM NORTON

I'll never ever EVER forget the look on Dame Vera Lynn's face when I gave her this giant black dildo live on air!

We'd invited her onto the show to do her whole World War Two hissy-fit routine against the Nazis, collecting for Poo-py (!) Day or whatever – but little did the old Dame know we'd be dropping a giant black dildo onto her ample lap!

She didn't seem to know what on earth it was – and our audience just went mad for that look of utter bewilderment, as though she'd just weed her knicks!

It wasn't only historical, it was *hysterical*! We jolly nearly pooed in our pants – talk about Diarrhoea of a Nobody!

Yes, the show was going from strength to strength, audience figures were growing all the time, Channel 4 couldn't get enough of us and it was classic TV moments like this that had earned me awards galore.

There were the usual whines in the right-wing press and from a miserable handful of sour, droopy-breasted old crones in the TV audience, but a week later the lovely David Furnish, who has since become a friend, told me that Elton, no less, absolutely *adored* it, and – stuff your elderly viewer up the arse with a goldfish – that's what matters most to *moi*.

I was enormously proud, too, of giving lots of lovely little ordinary unimportant people in our studio audience the chance to make complete prats of themselves before millions and millions of viewers. It was genuinely democratic television at its most innovative inspiring, and won me countless cutting-edge awards.

The little old lady we force-fed with laxatives, the single mother who agreed to wee live into a biscuit-tin, the border terrier that humped a wedding-cake just before the happy couple cut it, the cute young straight man who blind-tasted a Mysterious Deposit and thought it must be warm ice-cream, the fat slag who took off her bra and pooed into it, the black prostitute we made put a goldfish up her whoopsy in the belief it would guarantee her a place on Big Brother....these were just a few of the *hilarious* landmark moments on our acclaimed second series.

But that's enough about the poor little ordinary people, *merci tres beaucoup*! To be serious for one teensy-weensy minuto, what I have come to deeply value about the show is the real friendships it has afforded me with some very lovely people who just happen to be television executives.

Lovely, lovely Lorraine Heggessy, brilliant, brilliant head of BBC1, for instance. When Lorraine talks about television you can tell she's not just an executive but also an avid fan who knows that getting Ivana Trump to widdle into a flower-pot on my show to the tune of Agadoo is every bit as important as – snore, snore – Political Coverage, if not more so.

After all, who gives a fig whether Gordon Brown's left a carrot up his arse or not when Jade from Big Brother has agreed to sing a duet on the show with Jennie Bond? Over countless laughter-packed lunches, Lorraine's made it wonderfully clear that she's got no time at all for the old sourpusses who think TV should just be about Serious Matters and not about cocks and bottoms and fannies and piddle and poo and other things that matter to ordinary viewers.

Anyway, I love Lorraine to bits, we're firm friends and I know that if she's ever given the push by Auntie Beeb we'll still exchange Christmas cards, hectic schedules permitting.

We've always been very, very lucky to get lovely, clever Davina McCall on the show. She's since become a good friend. Being a TV presenter herself, she has an unmatched instinct for what makes good TV. Same goes for Mark Lamarr and Cilla Black, who are good friends too. Sadly, when I invite guests who aren't TV presenters onto the show they often let me down by being dreary. Why can't they realise when their booor-riiiing anecdotes are going on too long?

Dishy former hostage John McCarthy, for instance. After thirty long seconds of hearing about his mega-dreary captivity in the Lebanon, I thought we'd never hear the end of it. I felt like screaming. Any more professional former hostage would've known to lighten it up a bit with a funny story about one of his po-faced captors going pee-pee in his pants or something fun.

Professor Stephen Hawking? Pardon me while I yawn! We may as well have had a commercial break between each word, he was that sluggish. For all his undoubted fame, he could never hold down a job as a prime-spot interviewer on a terrestrial channel. He wasn't even up for a festive dance with Keith Harris and Orville at the end of the show. I'm SOOOO sorry, Stevey, but we won't be booking YOU again in a hurry.

But we've had some memorable firsts of which I'm tremendously proud. I was the first person to ask Kylie on live TV if she'd ever been seriously constipated, for instance, and I was also the first to get Matthew Perry from *Friends* to play with a giant vibrator shaped like a tortoise in front of Westminster's Betty Boothroyd. It was *hysterical*. He's since become a friend.

And I'll also go down in TV history as the very first TV presenter to persuade a 70-year-old dear in the audience to have a giant phallus tattooed on her bum to the delight of 4 million viewers – talk about fabulous, mould-breaking, historic TV!

So what next for Mademoiselle Graham? Whenever I think about the forthcoming BBC peak-time series that's going to launch me as an all-round family entertainer, I get a raging hard-on and want to spurt my magic ointment all over the nearest wall. I know all you funny little ordinary people are simply *gasping* and *aching* and *panting* to know the exact format, but for the moment my lips are zipped tight – and so too's my *derriere*, unless of course Brad Pitt comes knocking at the door dressed as a bunny rabbit!

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER

YOU WERE ASKED TO TAKE PART IN CELEBRITY MASTERMIND?!
YEP.
STREWTH GARY!
IT WAS FLATTERING AT FIRST BUT THEN I GOT WORRIED ABOUT BEING ABLE TO ANSWER ALL THOSE QUESTIONS..
SO WHAT DID YOU SAY?
WELL, AFTER CAREFUL THOUGHT I TOLD THEM I'D PASS.
TWENTY TWO TIMES. IT WAS THE MOST EMBARRASSING FEW MINUTES OF MY LIFE...
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO TRANSMIT IT, ARE THEY?

Literary Review

Birth pains

Making Babies
Anne Enright
(Cape, £10.99)

OF MAKING many babies, there is no end; and of making many books about babies, ditto. Some offer advice (shake the bottle, not the baby); others sternly command (four-hourly feeds or face the consequences!).

As a first-time parent, you are bombarded with information, 99 percent of which is unnecessary. Obviously, your own baby is the most wonderful baby ever born and unless you are completely bonkers your own instincts will tell you a thousand times more than any book about how to look after it. Failing that, ring the health visitor. Or failing that, ring your mum and do the opposite. But there's another category of baby book. What you might call Affirmative Goo. Usually written by other mums, the books in this category mainly consist of wall-to-wall gushing about how wonderful it is to be pregnant, to give birth, to breast feed, to burp, to change its mucky-wucky ickle nappikins – before giving the needy little mite to its hang-around dad or consigning it to the local nursery while we get down the serious business of being a mum, ie writing a book.

Anne Enright's book is affirmative goo to the max. Subtitled "Stumbling into motherhood" and "written to the sound of a baby's sleeping breath", it is suitably self-deprecatory and apologetic, and there's a cute picture on the front of a baby being sick on its mummy's shoulder (bless!); but none of this need disguise the fact that here is a woman who's had a baby ("I have given birth to a perfect child") and thinks she's the bee's knees for doing so.

Enright is an award-winning novelist, but the story here is the old, old one of the proud mother and her adorable baby ("Such a beautiful, beautiful baby") and in terms of news value right up there with boy mates girl and, er, girl gets into club. But what can she do? She's a writer.

"The baby sleeps for hours at a time, and I can't exactly leave the flat. So I might as well sit and type. All kinds of stuff. It doesn't look stupid to me..." She even types while breastfeeding.

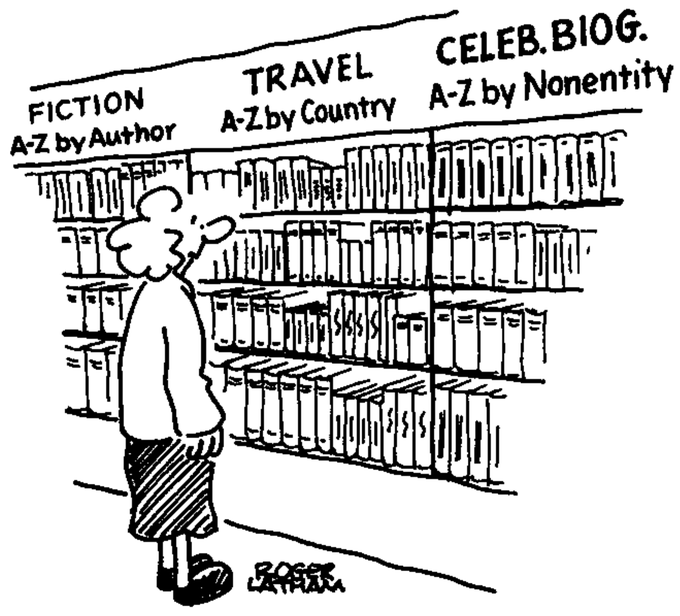
For folks who haven't had them, people talking about their own babies are (like the babies) screaming bores. For folks who have, it just embarrasses them to be reminded what screaming bores they once were themselves. Nothing daunted, Enright says she "wanted to say something about the anxiety of reproduction, the oddness of it". She is interested in "this new drama of being a mother... about which so little has been written." Anxiety is understandable, perhaps, in a middle-class intellectual for whom nothing real ever happens until it has been "written about"; but to describe the drama of having children as "odd" or "new" seems more than usually ivory-towered, even for a contributor to the *London Review of Books* (in whose pages bits of this book first appeared).

Then she goes and contradicts herself by saying: "In Ireland we have babies all the time. Easy-peasy. We have them just like that." She makes a great thing about having grown up in Ireland, mostly so she can be rude about the Catholic church and make fun of all those Americans who believe in aliens instead. The alien connection is interesting, though, because just like that other recent exponent of mum-lit, Tony Parsons (see *Eye* 1112), Enright describes giving birth as "like something out of *Alien*". In her case, though, she's not just exploiting a popular film reference; the scene in question is a symbol of that "reproductive anxiety" we heard about earlier, you see, the significance of which is underlined by several references to Freud.

"I don't think Freud ever discussed lactation," she muses at one point, before throwing in a dreamy reference to Dracula. Stern Dr Sigmund seems to have slipped up in other areas of motherly advice too, for he has "very little to say about wind".

Enright's book has naturally been coo'd and gushed over by her fellow wimmins page hackettes. But it joins a market already crowded by post-feminist reclamations of the moral right to motherhood, such as Rachel Cusk's *A Life's Work* and Kate Figes' *Life After Birth*, next to which it inevitably looks like a "me too" product. And in the end it's still just affirmative goo, the sort of stuff you might put in your own baby scrapbook or diary. Baby smiles; baby sees own hand; baby says hello birds hello sky, etc. "I find this really exciting," Enright says, before admitting that "no one else seems to".

Here's a word of advice to anyone else thinking of exploiting their baby for copy: (a) present it as something useful, like advice, even if it isn't (eg *How Not to Be a Perfect Mother* by Libby Purves); (b) don't make it look as if you did most of your research by phoning a friend or foraging in internet chat rooms; and (c) stop drivelling and drooling. That's the baby's job.



Idle chatter

How to be Idle
Tom Hodgkinson
(Hamish Hamilton, £12.99)

YOU CAN learn a lot from a book's acknowledgements – sometimes more than the author intends. At the back of *How to be Idle*, for example, Tom Hodgkinson doffs his cap to his editor Simon Prosser, the *eminence grise* at Hamish Hamilton, thus: "To Simon Prosser, who suggested I write something like this in the first place, and then commissioned it and then edited it, beautifully." Further down the page, he quips that "there are so many people quoted and cited that I barely seem to have written the book at all".

How to be Idle then, was not Tom Hodgkinson's idea and he didn't write very much of it. On the one hand this is indeed impressively idle; on the other it might make you think twice about buying it. The idea, such as it is, is taken wholesale from Hodgkinson's magazine, *The Idler*, a bi-annual that promotes laziness "as an essential component of modern life".

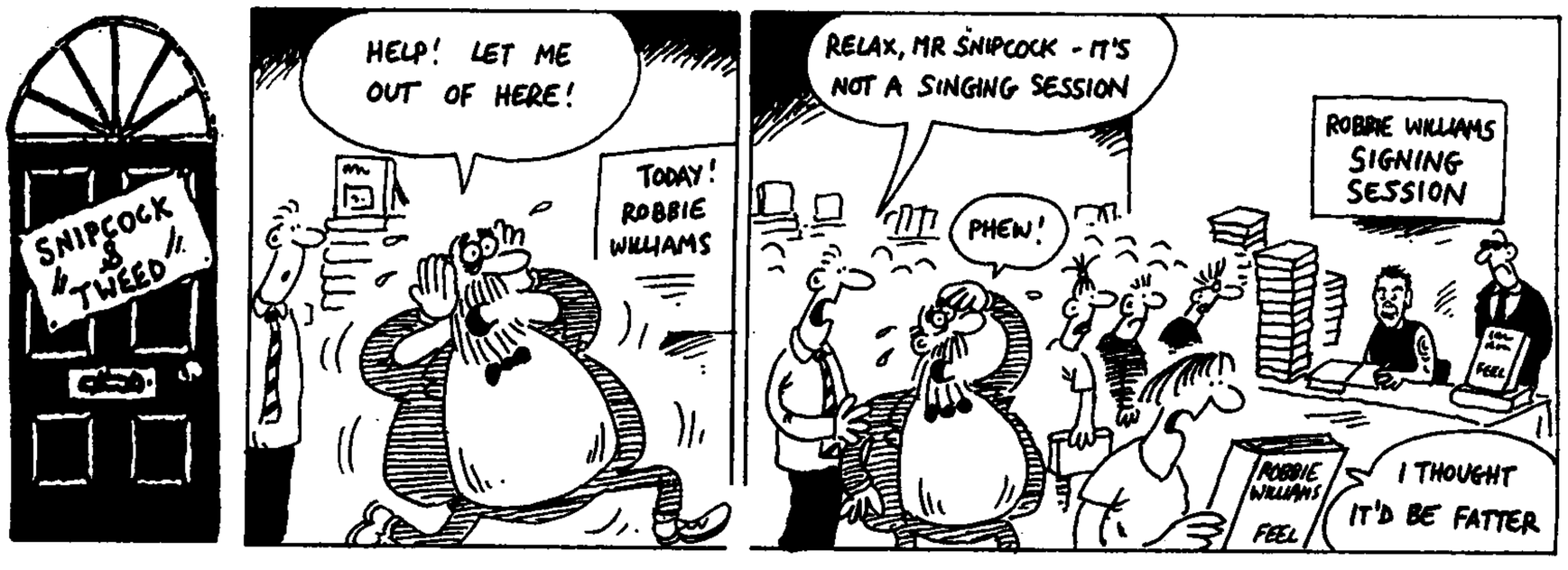
The argument is simple, creamed from O-level Romanticism and then embellished with sideswipes at the modern age. We are all mindless work-slaves, Puritans and zealots who need to throw off the shackles of the slave mentality and rise up. It is the joyful swain versus the downtrodden mill-hand, and Hodgkinson is in no doubt as to which is preferable – Idlers are dreamers, creatives, subject to sublime epiphanies and blissfully carefree.

Underlying it all is the classic "liberty" sophistry – that free will can only be exercised by opting *out*. To fertilise his 18th century thinking he employs the appropriate verbiage of the swooning poet: "Duty, oh, what a burden you are!" It is all mildly endearing... for about 16 pages.

The problem for Hodgkinson is that he has not only been shackled to a brief (turn a feature idea into a book that can then be sold back in as a feature) but also a troublesome format. There are 24 chapters, each telling you how to be idle for a given hour of the day. Every one is ready-made for a toilet stop, but Hodgkinson has to find a new means of doing nothing to fill them all. And *then* he has to try to weave each one into his proto-Romantic grand plan.

As a result, the feel of *How to be Idle* is not one of gentle drollery, but of almost torturous effort. Each chapter – fishing, smoking, talking, sleeping and so on – is strung out with a historical gloss (consisting of glib assertions such as "In the nineteenth century, England was a nation of idlers"), and lengthy quotes from Wilde, Dr Johnson and all the other speechwriter's best friends. In between, the argument is shrunk to fit, leading inevitably to contradiction. "It is while prone that ideas come," says page 32. "It is when walking that the *flaneur* thinks and generates ideas," counters page 101. To cap it all Simon Prosser's "beautiful" editing is actually bloody awful, with countless repetitions, for example, of who Walter Benjamin or Keith Waterhouse were.

All of the quotations and all of the ideology come from journalists, writers, poets and philosophers, and it is here that Hodgkinson really gives himself away. This book is less *How to be Idle* than *How to be Tom Hodgkinson*, journalist, writer, poet and sometime philosopher. It certainly sounds like a blissful life – drink, smoke, live in Devon, subsist on the odd book idea. Unfortunately, not everyone can be a freelance journalist, self-styled bohemian or flighty creative; not everyone wants to be. "Why are we all so desperate for jobs, by the way? They're horrible things," our sage opines. Well, it's not that we're *desperate* for jobs... but how else can we pay for the smoking jacket?


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
HELP! LET ME OUT OF HERE!
TODAY! ROBBIE WILLIAMS
RELAX, MR SNIPCOCK - IT'S NOT A SINGING SESSION
PHEW!
ROBBIE WILLIAMS SIGNING SESSION
ROBBIE WILLIAMS FEEL
I THOUGHT IT'D BE FATTER

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

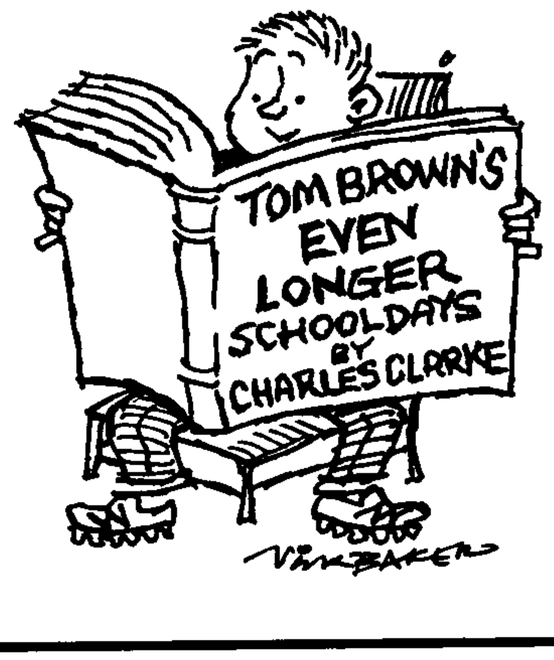
■ CHERIE Blair says she was inspired to write *The Goldfish Bowl* by reading a study of American presidents and their first ladies: "I was fascinated by the book and started to wonder if something similar could be done for the UK." It struck her that political biographers had never paid any attention to prime ministers' spouses.

"Mrs Blair describes the Number 10 consorts as 'the invisible witnesses of history'," says the *Daily Telegraph*, which is serialising *The Goldfish Bowl*. "Thanks to her book they are now very much in sight."

But when where they ever not? Norma Major was the subject of a full-length biography, as was Denis Thatcher. More generally, there is Kirsty McLeod's 1976 best-seller *The Wives of Downing Street*, followed a decade later by Diana Farr's, *Five at 10: Prime Ministers' Consorts Since 1957* – which (just like *The Goldfish Bowl*) includes long chapters on Dorothy Macmillan, Lady Home, Mary Wilson, Audrey Callaghan and Denis Thatcher. True, Farr didn't include Norma Major or Cherie Blair herself, but this omission was remedied by Mark Hichens's more recent book *Prime Ministers' Wives – and One Husband*.

Even so, a *Telegraph* editorial on Monday insisted that Cherie's choice of subject is "unprecedented". The leader's defensive tone ("Not everyone admires Cherie Blair... but even her critics must conceded that she is a fascinating and formidable figure") clearly signalled a desperate attempt to mollify the many readers who have already protested at their newspaper wasting so much space – and money – on Cherie's unrevealing witterings.

NEW CLASSIC BOOKS No. 94



■ *BESET by lawsuits, Conrad Black needs all the money he can get. But one source of funds – earnings from his recent biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt – looks less promising than he once hoped.*

Under his contract with Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Blackadder was due to receive 10 percent royalties – ie £3 per copy sold, with a cover price of £30. But when he actually delivered the book, his editor was horrified by its vast length (more than 1,300 pages, even after savage cutting) and feared that no one would buy it. To placate Weidenfeld's bean-counters, Black was forced to halve his royalty rate to 5 percent, ie a mere £1.50 a copy.

■ THE great Anthony Cheetham comeback has been more muted than most in the trade had expected.

The publisher who has had more comebacks than Frank Sinatra has passed up on the opportunity to build Constable & Robinson or Duckworth into another powerhouse, just as he did at Macdonald, Random Century and Orion. Instead he has accepted a consultancy role at Random House, "developing author and publisher opportunities", whatever that means. He will also make his debut as a novelist.

Gail Rebuck seems glad to have him: "I am delighted that he has chosen to make his continued and much valued publishing contribution with Random House."

Ol' Blue Eyes himself was similarly effusive:. "New companies can take 10 years to establish, by which time I'll be 72," he told *Publishing News*. "I thought, rather than start at the bottom, why not start at the top?"

What makes this move curious is that Random House used to be Random Century, from which Cheetham was sacked by Alberto Vitale 13 years ago. Vitale may be history, but the principal beneficiary of Frank's defenestration, namely Rebuck, is still around, which could make for interesting times at Vauxhall Bridge Road. As for "starting at the top", where does he plan to go from there? Could he be planning to oust Gail... and reclaim his birthright?

■ FOLLOWING our reports about Ottakar's, which suggested that the chain's overlord James Heneage earned a basic salary of £128,000, Heneage fired off a furious email to staff telling them the Eye was wrong. The figure, he said, should be £148,000 – the difference alone being nearly double the amount earned by some of his shop floor staff.

Having rubbed their noses in it, Heneage has also been expecting his booksellers to do unpaid overtime organising a week of fundraising for his current pet charity, the Children of Deogarh appeal. But some of the poorer Ottakar's staff are working themselves silly and wishing Heneage believed in charity beginning at home.

'Bookworm'

LIBRARY NEWS

■ WHEN the *Eye's* Piloti questioned the need for a swanky new out-of-centre library in Birmingham in 2002, a figure of £100m was being mooted for the scheme. Today, city leaders are looking at an estimated bill of £300m and thinking of calling the whole thing off.

The new library was to be a centrepiece of the Eastside Learning Quarter development and a replacement for the present Central Library, which was built in the 1960s and is located where its name suggests but needs around £20m of repairs and investment. Somehow the new building was supposed to represent better value for money.

Large sums have already been spent on the plans, with architect Richard Rogers designing a library which inspired praise from the Commission for the Built Environment but sighs from penny-pinching Birmingham council taxpayers. However, the council changed hands at the election and the new ruling coalition is less keen on the grandiose scheme. Nor are the new rulers impressed with the way their predecessors used "finger in the air" guesswork to cost it. They will make a final decision on whether to go ahead or not by the end of the year. Librarians shouldn't pack up yet.

In an age of paranoia and doubt, [Andrew] Flintoff is liberating, a cold beer on a hot day. If a Test Match is, indeed, a sporting Ring cycle, Flintoff is our Siegfried: innocent, fearless, the super-human shaper of events.

STEPHEN MOSS
Guardian

Pseuds Corner

The koi were making the usual commotion about their food. I was sitting on an upturned bucket, idly watching them, when I became aware of someone gently walking on my hand, a tiny someone as crisp and fine as if she had been newly blown out of glass... She was a miniature Biedermeier bibelot, in all less than half an inch long. Failing to recognise her would be like failing to recognise Coco Chanel.

GERMAINE GREER encounters a hoverfly
Weekend Telegraph

It knows darkness, certainly, and after all those years, uncertainty. Perhaps it knows slowing down. You might as well wait. It must know snowfalls, and stillness, and quiet cold mornings when no one is about. And it knows a strange kind of ripening, how one day there's nothing and the next day green, little flowers, buzzing insects. It could well remember wind and clouds and heat and cats crawling purposively through the grass. I suspect it knows old closets and clothes softened with wear, and marriages softened with wear, and love made slowly and kisses that don't have to taste good, but still do.

Terry Theise Estate Selection wine catalogue on the 1990 Riesling 'Vinothek'

I doubt there is a person alive who watched Paula Radcliffe, bewildered and broken, who did not feel great compassion for the woman. Her face was torn by defeat. I have only seen such anguish beside an open grave.

AMANDA PLATELL
Evening Standard

"People squeal when they come through the door," smiles Jakobsson. "Sometimes the array of all the cakes together can be quite overwhelming." He can say that again. Mini Victoria sponges sit next to lemon cupcakes, next to fairy cakes covered in hundreds and thousands. Every cake is lovingly created – and looks it. "I think people like that," says Jakobsson. "They get quite specific – 'I want the one third from the back, the slightly sad-looking one.'"

LAUREN COCHRANE interviews 'chic baker' BUX JAKOBSSON
Guardian

Pseuds Corporate

Enclosing our customers in a legendary service experience in the supply of oil and water storage tanks

Atlantis installation company promotional literature

● The Sun is our primary natural resource. All life begins with the sun – the ultimate symbol of vitality

● The Heart represents love, care and health – feeling good

● The Shirt represents fresh laundry – looking good

● A Bird is a symbol of freedom. Relief from daily chores – getting more out of life

Unilever

Unilever joint chairmen ANTHONY BERGMANS and NIALL FITZGERALD announcing their new corporate logo (essentially the letter U)

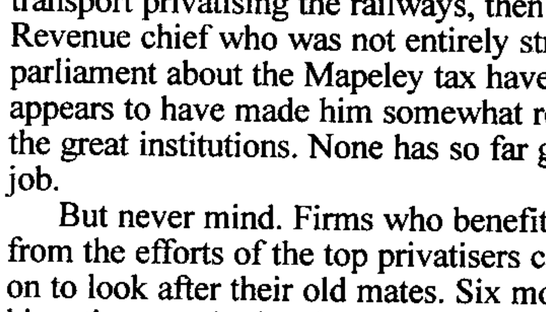
CONTRIBUTORS: Andrew Taylor (and 7 others), Edgar Jones, David Tong, Anon, Glenn Morris, Andy Burton, Anonymous Unilever employee

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

TAX HAVEN NEWS

STEPS to heaven



MORE news of Sir Nicholas Montagu (pictured above), the former Inland Revenue chairman who managed to flog off Britain's Revenue and Customs estates to a company based in an offshore tax haven.

When he retired in March, Montagu was known to be touting himself around in the hope of securing work to supplement his civil service pension. As he told *Accountancy* magazine last year: "If a university would be prepared to take me on as its vice-chancellor for three or four years or if there were a big charity that thought I had something to offer, I'd be happy to do that."

Alas, despite the pitch for a well-paid sinecure, Sir Nicholas's record – first at the department of transport privatising the railways, then as the Revenue chief who was not entirely straight with parliament about the Mapeley tax haven affair – appears to have made him somewhat resistible to the great institutions. None has so far given him a job.

But never mind. Firms who benefit hugely from the efforts of the top privatisers can be relied on to look after their old mates. Six months after his retirement (or just long enough to dispel any suspicion of a conflict of interest), PricewaterhouseCoopers has come to Montagu's rescue and appointed him to its advisory board, at an undisclosed salary, where he will join former Tory privatisers Lord Freeman and Malcolm Rifkind.

PwC is the most prolific PFI consultant, having advised on £30bn worth of projects to date, and declares that it is looking forward to Montagu's "unique perspective". Sir Nicholas knows a fair bit about PwC already. Over the last three years, as well as earning vast sums from the government on PFI and other contracts, the firm has been the driving force behind moves to overrule Britain's anti-tax avoidance laws in the British and European courts, encouraging as many of its large corporate clients as possible to sue the government for having prevented them from, er, avoiding tax.

In his last year at the Revenue, facing intense criticism over the tax haven deal and accusations of going soft on tax avoidance, Montagu launched a public campaign on the immorality of tax dodging. Whether he will continue this crusade as an adviser to one of the finest exponents of the art remains to be seen.

PS: If Sir Nicholas is given a roving brief and ever gets to visit PwC's substantial Bermudan branch at 7 Church Street, Hamilton, he can always pop in to number 44, just up the road, where Mapeley Steps, the company to which he sold his old tax offices, can be found.

PPS: The Commons public accounts committee (PAC) has summoned Montagu's successor, David Varney, the new chairman of the Inland Revenue and Customs, to answer questions on the Mapeley Steps PFI deal, on 27 October.

The PAC's renewed interest may be related to revelations in *Eye* 1112, following parliamentary questions from Labour MP Denzil Davies, that the contract is costing taxpayers about £75m a year more than it should do.

PFI NEWS

Where there's brass... there's more brass

ONE threat to the government's huge private finance initiative (PFI) programme is that, while there are plenty of consultants and accountants keen to advise on the process, there is a growing shortage of companies to actually build the schools, hospitals and roads the system is supposed to be about.

This isn't surprising given how much money can be made from PFIs without ever sticking a shovel in the ground. Witness the transformation of former construction company, John Laing.

In 2000 Laing decided to end its illustrious history of building things, such as the Severn Bridge in the 1980s, and concentrate on investing in and managing PFI projects instead. As a result it has just announced vastly increased profits, hot on the heels of a £35m "refinancing gain" it made on its stake in the Norfolk and Norwich PFI hospital last year (see *Eye* 1098).

Laing now boasts involvement in 40 PFI projects and has 11 more all but in the bag as "preferred bidder", each with the potential to generate similar windfalls. Through its rebranded PFI division Equion, the two areas it is most eagerly sizing up are health and road projects.

Laing's burgeoning PFI portfolio includes projects that last up to 30 years. But the company recognises that the big money in PFI is now to be made by flogging these "lengthy ventures" as soon as possible and using the money to sign more PFI deals. Or, as chief executive Andy Friend says: "We haven't sold any mainline assets into the market yet but we expect to when it gets going."

In the unregulated market on which they will be sold, there is no guarantee of any kind of financial security from the new owners of the public facilities. Indeed, most will be largely unaccountable private equity firms that know nothing about schools, hospitals or roads. Financial security in PFI, it seems, is only for those who own the assets and sell them on for huge profits, not those who have to use them.

One of the outfits providing the "market" in PFI assets is Innisfree, a self-styled "infrastructure investment group". It has just announced that it has raised £360m from private investors and pension funds; and after borrowing a further few billion, the company reckons it will be able to buy between $4bn and £7bn of PFI assets.

The priority of the new owners of PFI deals is simply to maximise income from them. The £700,000 salary of David Metter, chief executive of Innisfree, suggests they are quite adept at this. No wonder he is happy to run the PPP Forum lobby group, which presses the government to throw more services to the private finance market, many of which will eventually be eagerly gobbled up by private funds such as, er, Innisfree.

Full of beans

AS THE reputation of the big four accountancy firms reaches a new low with almost daily revelations about a new scandal, there is some good news for the bean-counters from an unlikely source.

Steve Bundred, chief executive of the audit commission and former leftwing firebrand at the Greater London Council, has announced that the accountants will be invited to do some of the commission's inspection work. This mainly involves "independently" testing the quality of health and local authority services.

Steve Bundred

As well as raising obvious concerns over why accountants should be qualified to judge local public services, the proposal poses the important question of how the accountants will approach services provided under private finance initiative projects. Most of these schemes are, after all, set up with advice from the big four accountancy firms.

Last year, departing audit commission chief executive Andrew Foster complained that a commission report criticising the value for money of PFI schools was delayed because ministers were "unhappy with the message". The big accountants now doing the inspections will surely know better than to be too critical of services under the very PFI schemes they make so much money from setting up, thus averting such tricky political problems.

NUCLEAR SECRETS

Mum's the word

WITH a freedom of information act and a European Union directive on public access to environmental information both looming early next year, the UK's nuclear industry must have been wetting itself about what it might have been obliged to disclose.

But never fear. The Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS), part of the department of trade and industry, has drawn up its own guidelines for nuclear power bosses on what the public should be allowed to know.

The OCNS claims the September 11 attacks three years ago as the logic for clamping down now on the information available to potential terrorists – whatever the effect on democratic access to information which raises legitimate safety concerns for the public.

But the new "guidance on the sensitivity of nuclear and related information and its disclosure" document doesn't merely maintain current levels of secrecy: it creates further restrictions on what will be made public. Most troubling is the section on "safety cases" – the documentation which must be produced for the nuclear installations inspectorate (NII) before any new project. "Details of the potential hazards… or details on the impacts of releases" are deemed "not releasable".

"The type of detail information contained in safety cases would be of great use as an aid to potential attacker for choosing targets and planning an operation," says the OCNS. Safety cases have rarely been accessible to the public in the past, but it has at least been a realistic prospect for campaigners, such as those opposing the Wylfa power station, to ask the health and safety commission (HSC) to order publication of the case.

In 1997 Nirex lost the public inquiry into its plans for a lab to pave the way for a waste burial site near Sellafield, thanks to the failures of its half-cocked, less than half-finished safety case.

The guidance also repeats the restriction on information about transport of nuclear material. The 2001 terrorism legislation made it a serious offence to reveal the routes of Britain's nuclear waste trains, even though they are large, visible objects which have been the subject of many protests from those who live in areas, like Willesden in north-west London, where the trains stand in sidings for days at a time.

HOME OFFICE PRIVATISATION

Hostels to fortune

WILL the new hostels for paedophiles announced last week by home secretary David Blunkett be run by the private sector? God forbid.

For more than a year now the *Eye* has catalogued the disasters that have followed privatisation of the maintenance of Britain's 100-plus bail hostels. Taxpayers have been paying an average of £50,000 to £60,000 a year more for each hostel and for a service that has become a national disgrace. Many hostels have been left *without* proper fire cover, cooks or cleaners, but with major repair problems.

This summer the home office belatedly investigated the failures after the financial figures showed "costs significantly above those initially reported and budgeted for". It was also concerned about the "relatively high level of complaints and poor performance on the premises".

Of particular worry for the investigating team was the use of subcontractors by the Anglian Water Group (AWG), which had taken over the maintenance of the hostels from Morrison's. "They appear to employ none of the staff involved," said the home office report. In addition to concerns about poor management, financial controls and communication, Blunkett's department has now had to second two staff from the probation service to tell AWG how to run its hostels and improve its communications.

In other words, it would have been more efficient and cost-effective to keep Britain's bail hostels in the public sector.

Noms bombs

THE dog's breakfast that is the national offender management service (Noms) goes from strength to, er, strength. As predicted by the *Eye*, plans to merge prisons and probation under 10 regional offender managers (Roms) have come badly unstuck.

Instead of abolishing the 42 probation boards as part of the merger, it has been decided to keep them. The loss of one of the key components of Noms, now leaves the home office with 10 Roms, each on an annual salary of £70,000 and with a job description that is changing by the week.

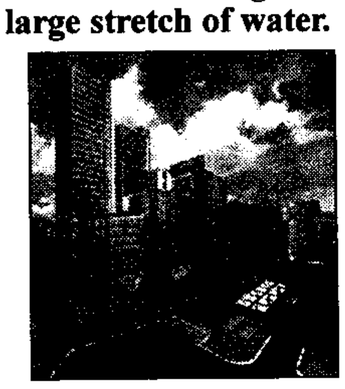
At a meeting last month with Noms managers, union reps were told that the Roms would "evolve their own job descriptions". But a "detailed structure of what was within Noms" had still not been worked out; and nor was it known if the prison service would keep its agency status. So, nine months after the new service was set up under former prisons chief Martin Narey and with no business case, nothing is any clearer.

Napo, the probation union, says all that has been achieved is the addition of another tier of bureaucracy – diverting millions of pounds from frontline staff.

PADDINGTON BASIN

Hare-brained Harefield

DESPITE the vast expense of moving a set of well-established specialist hospitals to one giant privately-financed complex at Paddington Basin in London, allegedly because it will be more convenient for patients and staff, it now emerges that the buildings will be separated by... a large stretch of water.



The super-hospital campus will, according to latest plans, be on three sites, with the Harefield and Royal Brompton hospitals and Imperial College's national heart and lung institute on one side of the Grand Union Canal and St Mary's hospital for women and children on the other.

Patients and staff will be able to wave at each other through the windows, but to get from one area to another for an expert consultation will mean a trek to a footbridge (for the physically able) or a lengthier journey by road.

The point of the exercise was supposedly to have everyone on one integrated site. So why the change of plan? As reported in *Eye* 1098, the cost of the mega-merger has already rocketed from £360m to £800m; but the whole thing was so ill thought out, there was never enough room on the site as it was. An attempt to take out an astronomically expensive lease on the nearby "The Point" office building failed and now the site on the other side of the canal is the best available option in Paddington.

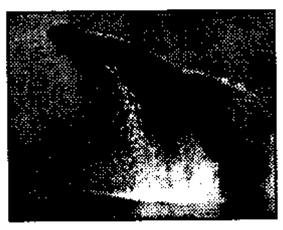
Little wonder the project directors have been reluctant to talk about the new plan in the public parts of their public meetings which are attended by campaigners against the scheme. However, they can no longer hide their intentions as they are mentioned in the highly-critical national audit office (NAO) report into the fiasco, published last week.

"There have been shortcomings in the way the Paddington Health Campus scheme has been run, reflecting changing and inadequate governance arrangements, the absence of agreed affordability envelopes and insufficient funding for the Project Team," the report notes. "Unless each of the above weaknesses is addressed, it is unlikely that the required investment in the NHS in West London will achieve its objectives."

The report has vindicated Heart of Harefield campaigners and other opponents of the scheme, who have been arguing these points for years.

WHALING

In for the krill



THE kind-hearted Japanese government announced last week that it had written off $255m of Malawi's bilateral debt with the country – no less than 70 percent of the total. But such handsome generosity has its price. The foreign affairs ministry said the largesse was intended "to promote cooperative relations in the international arena on such issues as... the International Whaling Commission".

In short, it's a bribe. As we reported in the last *Eye*, Japan is devoting ever more money and effort to overturning the moratorium on commercial whale-hunting, introduced by the IWC in 1986. In return for lavish inducements, many of the world's poorest countries have been persuaded to join the commission and vote with Japan – so many, indeed, that they now almost have a majority. Malawi isn't yet a member of the IWC, but it's a safe bet this will be remedied before long, probably in time for the next annual meeting in South Korea next summer.

One new IWC member voting for the first time in 2005 will be Mali, which joined last month even though it is a landlocked country with nary a whale in sight. Japanese officials are also waving their chequebooks at the government of Madagascar, where humpback whales off the shore of Sainte-Marie have become a major tourist attraction in recent years. For now the country still supports the moratorium – not least, as the president of Sainte-Marie's whale commission explains, "because hunting whales is not traditional here". But he adds that Japan is "putting enormous economic pressure on the Madagascar authorities", so that may soon be another vote in the bag.

In Bangkok next month, at the meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, we shall see the same Japanese vote-buying strategy applied to reopening trade in whale meat. Unfortunately it will be difficult to ascertain precisely which votes have been bought since the decision will – at Japan's insistence – be taken by secret ballot.

POWER

Grid riddance

WHEN power cuts plunged London and Birmingham into darkness last year, many informed observers called for more investment in the national grid, owned by the privatised gas and electricity monopoly supplier, National Grid Transco (NGT).

Then in March this year, in a report reviewing the "resilience of the national grid", parliament's trade and industry committee concluded that "there is a danger that there is currently insufficient investment in the network to replace in a planned and orderly way equipment which is reaching the end of its life" and "there is a pressing need for extra investment".

Now that it has emerged that NGT is to sell four of its local gas distribution companies for around £6bn to various British and foreign consortiums, those caught up in last year's blackouts might expect there to be some cash available for this much-needed investment. But the privatised grid has other priorities.

NGT announced that £2bn of the proceeds will go to shareholders in dividends to keep up the NGT share price. Meanwhile much of the remaining £4bn is reportedly earmarked to buy electricity businesses in the United States, where regulation is looser and returns correspondingly higher. (The risks are of course also greater, as the dramatic blackouts across North America, including for customers supplied by NGT's subsidiary company, Niagara Mohawk, showed last year.) It doesn't look as if the creaking national grid will benefit from the sales at all.

PS: Energy minister Stephen Timms rewarded National Grid Transco last week with the contract to run the electricity trading and transmission market throughout Britain.

PPS: Among advisers to NGT on the sale of the gas distributors were blue-blooded merchant bankers Rothschilds and Cazenove. One man who must be particularly pleased with the latest deals is Sir Steve Robson, the man in charge of privatisation at the treasury throughout the 1980s and 90s until leaving in 2001 to pursue private sector opportunities – including a well-remunerated directorship with Cazenove!

TETRA

Masters and servants

TELECOM company MMO2 Airwave has hit on another excuse for flouting planning law in its attempt to fix Tetra radio masts for the new police radio system to anything that's bolted to the ground.

Last week Angus council in Tayside turned down an application to stick a mast on top of a telephone exchange in Broughty Ferry, near Gleneagles Hotel. Nevertheless Airwave plans to go ahead with its plan regardless, saying it needs to get the mast up now to have enough time to test the system before next year's G8 summit at Gleneagles.

Tayside police are baffled by the urgency and have told local hacks that all security plans for the world leaders' summit – including communication resources – are still at an early stage. An alternative is to put a Tetra mast, disguised as a flagpole, on the hotel itself.

In the City

EVERTON is, it seems, going to get its Russian money and new owners after all. Chairman Bill Kenwright assured shareholders last week that the deal with Fortress Sports Fund, whose only identified investors are the multi-millionaire Zingarevich family from Ilim Pulp, was still very much on and that the fund could soon be injecting £30m for a 40 percent stake in the Toffeemen.

Fortress will be represented on the Everton board by Geneva-based company administrator Christopher Samuelson, once of offshore company manager Valmet, now known as Mutual Trust Management. "He has a great track record and reputation in Geneva. We've undertaken searches on his credentials and they've come out good," Kenwright declared.

The Valmet/Samuelson track record was discussed in the last *Eye*. Which may explain Kenwright's comments. It most certainly explains a long letter from Samuelson at pains to stress to the *Eye* just how "mundane" his business is and how so not "colourful" are his clients.

Quite properly Samuelson describes the big name firms who have and continue to advise his former partner Mikhail Khodorkovsky of Yukos and its controlling Gibraltar shareholder, Group Menatep. He is keen to show that another ex-Valmet partner Peter Bond (who departed after Valmet was acquired by Mutual Risk Management of Bermuda in 2001) was provided with immunity to testify about their client, convicted US fraudsman Robert Brennan, at the insistence of the Manx court. Russians, he says, make up less than 5 percent of his 6,000 clients from more than 100 countries in a business that is "legitimate careful financial planning for high net worth clients and corporations". Quite so.

"Get the facts not the fiction" Samuelson suggests, while not contesting any of those in the previous issue. So here are some more facts Samuelson may have overlooked in his reply.

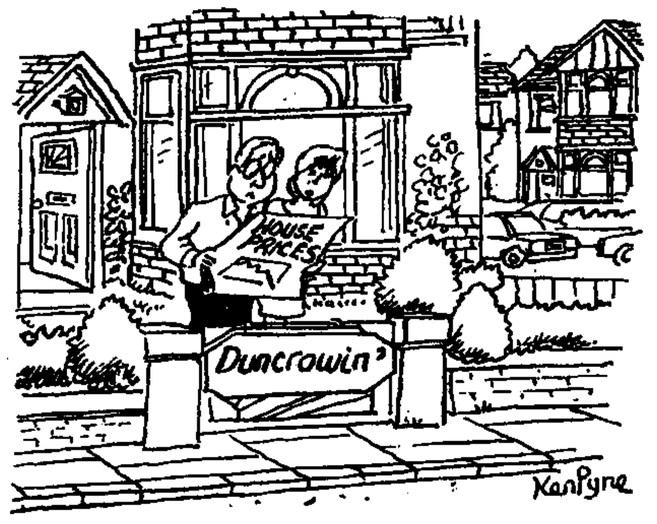
Mutual Trust Management (UK) has yet to file any accounts at Companies House since it was registered in 2002. Companies House suspended (but may soon resume) action to strike off the company for non-compliance after an annual return for 2003 was filed late in March this year. The 2004 return and, more importantly, the accounts are still overdue by several months.

MTM (UK) gives as its registered address 94 Park Lane, Mayfair, which happens also to be the offices of Curtis & Co, the law firm of the late Stephen Curtis, who fell out of the sky in his helicopter soon after offering to give information to the British authorities about his clients at Yukos whom he and Bond had assisted with their "careful financial planning". Planning which may help explain why Yukos now faces a $3bn tax bill for each of two years, Khodorkovsky is in a Moscow jail on trial for fraud and most of the Yukos/Menatep hierarchy have fled Russia.

Both Curtis and Samuelson were directors of the property management company 94 Park Lane which appears to be Curtis & Co's landlord and is owned by Valmet Gibraltar. The cause of Curtis' death remains unclear pending an inquest.

Among Samuelson's co-directors at Mutual Trust Management SA listed in Geneva is Roger Hunziker, like Peter Bond familiar to financial regulators and courts in Britain and Canada because of the "careful financial planning" carried out by clients of his former company, Rhone Finance. These clients featured in insider-dealing investigations and other colourful transactions.

Offshore "letter box" companies administered by Rhone Finance with addresses at a postbox in Geneva airport bought and sold large quantities of Polly Peck shares before Asil Nadir's empire collapsed in 1990. One company, Blade Explorations, sold Polly Peck shares worth £2m in August 1990 after Nadir announced a shortlived plan to take Polly Peck private. The shares were owned by a previously unknown Turkish Cypriot who was suspected to be an associate of Nadir's family. Three days after the sale Nadir dropped his plan. The Polly Peck price fell sharply.



Two other Geneva-based companies, Gateway and Riverbridge, were used by Jason Davies, a close associate of Nadir and his influential aide Elizabeth Forsyth, to trade Polly Peck shares. Former stockbroker Davies worked with Forsyth at South Audley Management, across Berkeley Square from Nadir's office, handling Nadir family investments. He later moved to Geneva to continue with these activities.

These Swiss-based share deals were put under the microscope after Polly Peck crashed. The administrators obtained a temporary Mareva freezing order against Rhone Finance in 1991 in pursuit of information about the proceeds from the share sales. Also on that Mareva list was the Swiss branch of accountants Rawlinson & Hunter (R&H), which had acted for Nadir. Hunziker formerly worked at R&H before joining Rhone Finance but denied he knew Nadir there. In October 1990 Hunziker denied any wrongdoing by Rhone or its staff who, he insisted, only carried out orders.

A year later Rhone Finance was embroiled in another Nadir-linked row over £100,000 handed over by a British investor to his cousin in August 1990. The investor obtained a Mareva order against Nadir's relative. The £100,000 had been transferred by chartered accountant Roger Leopard, a Rhone director, on behalf of a Liberian company, Alpha Fund Management, and disappeared. What happened to the £100,000 is unclear.

Five years later Leopard and another of Hunziker's British associates at Rhone Finance were called to testify at the 1996 trial of Forsyth. Despite providing a live TV link, neither Rhone managing director Ian McNeil nor Leopard gave evidence. Their absence was heavily criticised by the trial judge, Mr Justice Tucker. The court was told both had been advised by Swiss lawyers of "undesirable consequences" if they testified due to Swiss laws of confidentiality. Leopard was also described as too ill to testify.

By the time of the Forsyth trial, Rhone Finance had featured in a major insider-dealing inquiry. In 1994 the Department of Timidity & Inaction produced its report into the massive insider-dealing in Consolidated Gold Fields ahead of the 1988 bid by Minorco.

The inspectors discovered that two companies administered by Roger Leopard at Rhone – Alpha Fund Management and London Wall Investments – had bought 25 "call" options to buy thousands of shares in ConsGold at £9 and £11 ahead of the £13 a share bid. Instructions to buy these very profitable options were given by Leopard to a London broker on behalf of clients. "We have been unable to identify the beneficiaries of these transactions… because of Swiss legislation," the inspectors wrote. The inspectors did not criticise Leopard or Rhone but found there had been a clear leak of information about the Minorco bid and that the options purchases were more than likely insider-dealing.

Alpha and Rhone also cropped up in share dealings in Vancouver which attracted the attention of the British Columbia Securities Commission. During 1991 and 1993 they were linked to the purchase of shares and payment of fees related to Rare Earth Resources and the Alberta-listed Cycomm International. Both were high flyers that crashed after regulators in 1993 began investigating the trading activities of insiders and the companies' disclosures. Philip Garrett, the promoter behind both companies, later stepped down.

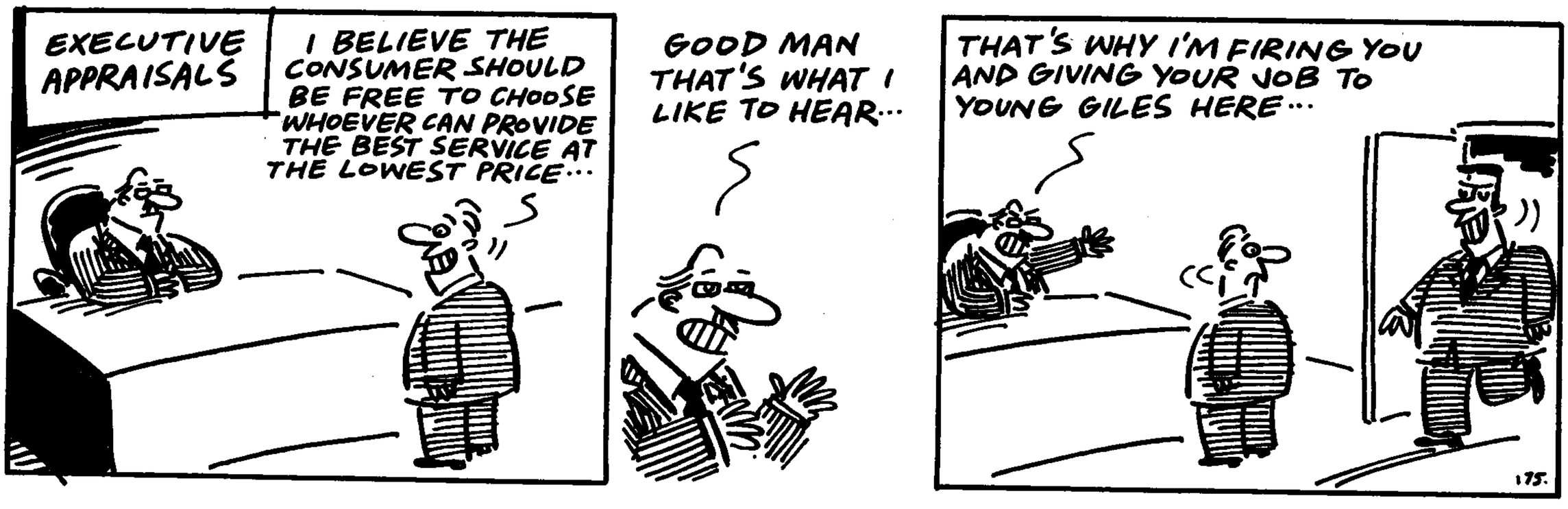
No doubt these were all the fault of Rhone Finance's few colourful clients acting without Rhone's knowledge and who were anyway a tiny fraction of the respectable majority who used their services for perfectly legal purposes.

Clearly the track record, reputation and credentials of Roger Hunziker are as great and good as those of his boardroom colleague at Mutual Trust Management and soon to be Everton director, Christopher Samuelson.

SCOTLAND Yard has begun a major incident investigation into the death of Abbey National business analyst Richard Chang, who fell from the fifth floor of the bank's London head office atrium in July. The police, including fraud squad officers, are expected to examine the circumstances leading up to Chang's suspected suicide, including the contents of an anonymous letter sent to Abbey chief

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG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Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

Two ICIs

Value of shares in ICI...

...in four years under CEO Brendan O'Neill: +106%

...in the 18 months since he left: −85%

executive Luqman Arnold. The expanded investigation follows pressure from Chang's family. It will probably delay the inquest until next year.

Chang died within an hour of leaving an unfinished interview with investigators from Kroll Associates called in by Abbey to discover the author of the letter which contained allegations of favouritism and possible corruption regarding software contracts. Chang, who worked in the IT section, was one of eight suspects due to be interviewed by Kroll. He was due to leave for a new position at Royal Bank of Scotland.

Chang's line manager, Vincent Santeng, who was being interviewed by Kroll when Chang fell, has been suspended. There are suggestions that he may begin employment tribunal proceedings against Abbey if he is the target of disciplinary action. Quite unfairly it appears allegations have been made within Abbey generated by a number of simple and irrelevant coincidences from which clearly the wrong conclusions may have been drawn.

Among the senior executives with whom Chang worked were Nicholas Riley and Nathan Bostock, both directors of Abbey National Treasury Services. Riley came to Abbey from Credit Suisse First Boston, where he was a managing director, to become a senior executive responsible for IT. Bostock came to Abbey from Royal Bank of Scotland, where he was director of group risk, to become head of treasury services. Before Credit Suisse Riley was chief admin officer of global financial markets at NatWest until 1997.

Nigel Walder was head of technology at NatWest Global financial markets before he founded the Buttonwood Tree consulting group in 2000. Riley is to be found waxing lyrically about the virtues of Buttonwood Tree on its website from his former position at Credit Suisse. Credit Suisse is a Buttonwood Tree client. So too is Royal Bank of Scotland.

In March 2003, software group Wall Street Systems signed a deal with Abbey National Treasury Services. The US company is used by a large number of top foreign exchange trading banks. Its treasury engine IT system was to be used in Abbey's short-term money market operations.

Among Wall Street Systems' stellar clients are Credit Suisse and RBS.

In May 2003 Buttonwood Tree was awarded the consultancy contract to manage the restructuring of Abbey National Treasury Services, including presumably implementation of the Wall Street Systems software programme as part of redesigning the entire IT operation.

Since Buttonwood Tree and Wall Street Systems arrived, IT staff at Abbey National report considerable and expensive problems and much internal unhappiness. A number of staff have left.

Riley left Abbey National in April – before the anonymous letter. Insiders thought he would be head of the restructured IT department. Instead that position seems to have been outsourced to Nigel Walder and Buttonwood Tree. Bostock and Walder are now overseeing the Wall Street Systems implementation exercise.

By coincidence, it emerges that Richard Chang's widow works for the Financial Services Authority which – given its past disciplining of Abbey – may be interested in the outcome of the police investigation. So too are likely to be rival bidders Banco Santander and HBOS.

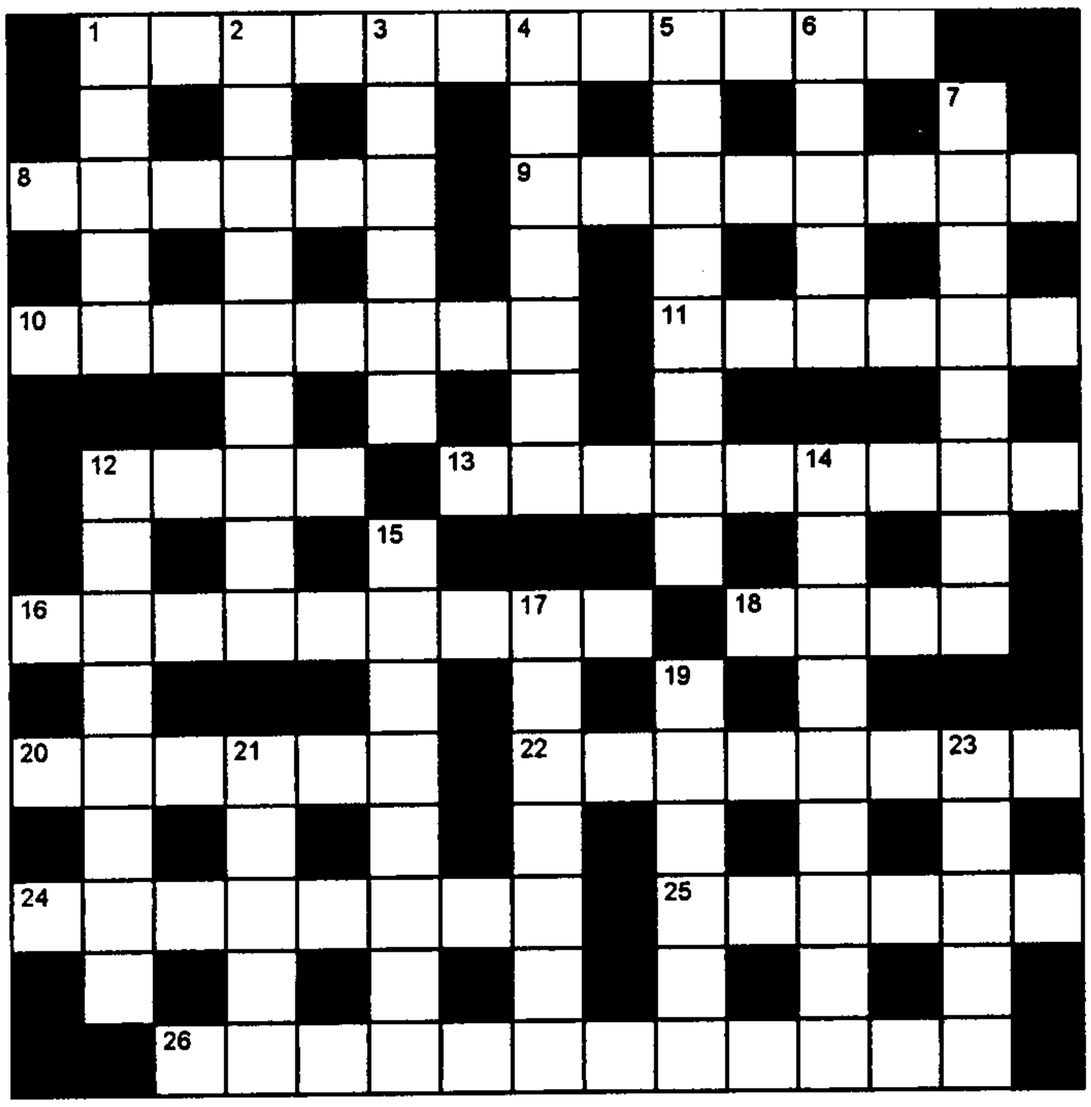
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 270

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 24 September 2004.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 "One sort of tit," bloke cries out loud, "for our boob collection" (12)

8 Type of party piece that's a perennial court disappointment (6)

9 Performer no longer equipped for maintaining the highs (8)

10 New start for, say, philatelist, as would-be manipulator of member (8)

11 Gun lover, he's on speed (6)

12 Corporate excess: strong links with Blair's party (4)

13 *Blowing Wild*, Gale Flint (9)

16 "Family fun's no. 1 in glossy porn film!" (9)

18 Service the girl without resistance (4)

20 Organ stimulated by top grade butter (6)

22 Pointless the House going to Brenda – not her type at all (8)

24 War criminal Hussein's end – after machine rolls (8)

25 Queen, some say, hosting sex outside English theatre once (6)

26 Howard's persecutor screwed ex-MP, Mary Jane (6,6)

DOWN

1 Some swear by one that's bloody firm externally (5)

2 Wally to replace Blair? Amen! (4,5)

3 Something of Beckham in Nietzsche's mousy girlfriend (6)

4 After snog, truss becomes formal item of wear, these days (7)

5 Crack cocaine's heart and unlikely hero, Les (8)

6 Legislative body that's seen its fair share of spin (5)

7 Rate Tony awful representative (8)

12 What our Brian would be: able to go round fooling one's sexual partner? (6,2)

14 *Mirror* set to "explode" Bush's claimed war target (9)

15 Hatchetman's objective: separation of knockers (8)

17 Member with desire to overturn Londoner (7)

19 Gemma's out to reveal what might be under foreskin (6)

21 Murdoch resented accommodating wishy-washy Brown (5)

23 Ben and Mark having erection entertaining Liberal's leader (5)

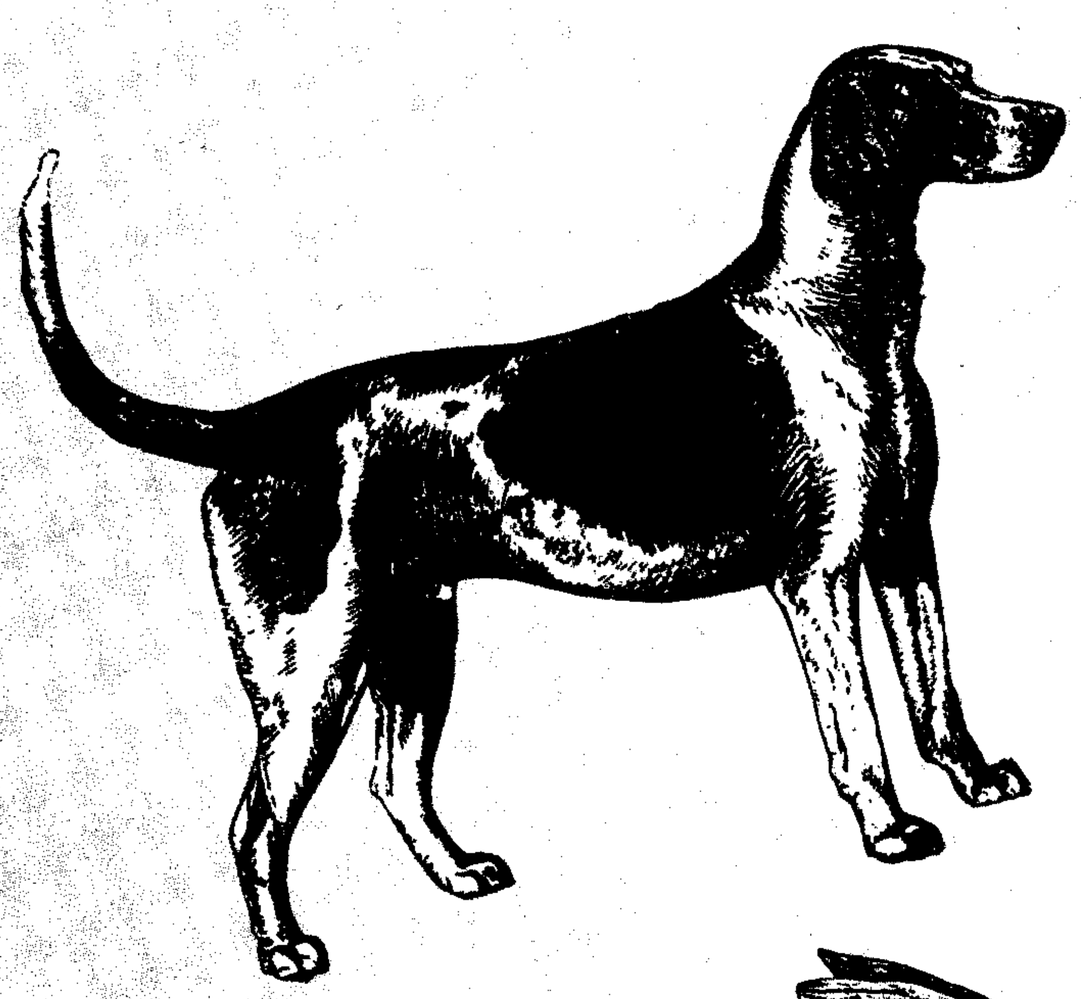
Crossword 269 winner: KEITH MASSON

ACROSS: 1/4D Going pear-shaped 4 Pikestaff 9 Backslash 10 Nehru 11 Euphuism 12 Tobruk 14 Sabre 15 Anonymity 17 President 19 Elfin 21 Orgies 23 Highbrow 25 Erect 26 Poker face 27 Bedwarmer 28 Style.

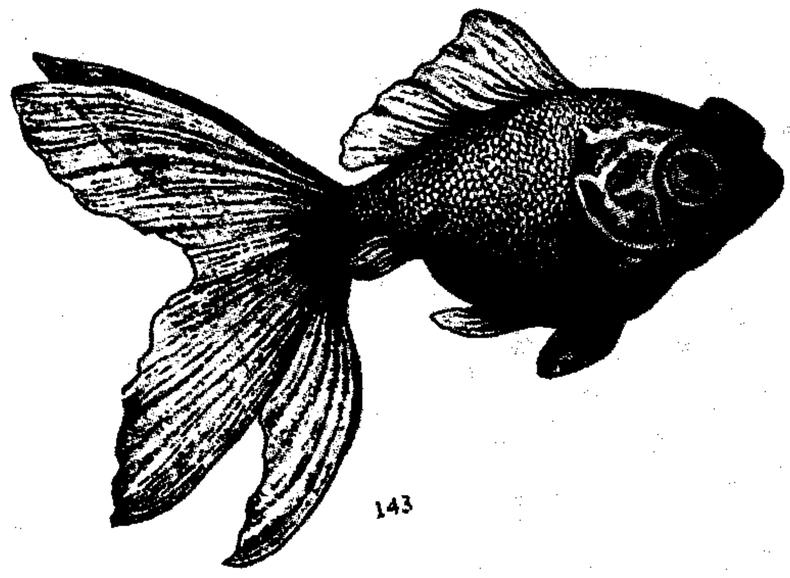
DOWN: 1 Giblets 2 Incapable 3 Gesture 5 Kohl 6 Sensory 7 Abhor 8 Flunkey 13 Bootlicker 16 Infirmary 17 Proverb 18 Inertia 19 Exhorts 20 Nowhere 22 Greed 24 Spam.

Ketchup 74%
Brown Sauce 18%
Mustard 8%

Source: Gallup Choice Survey of Ketchup and Its Sources



141



143

142

144

'PETS' figures 141-144.

Dog 40%
Cat 25%
Fish 24%
Bird 11%

Roses 38%
Lillies 30%
Gerberas 20%
Carnations 12%

Blue 60%
Orange 24%
White 16%

Jam Filled 38%
Chocolate Cream 22%
Custard Cream 26%
Pink Wafer 8%
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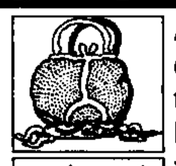
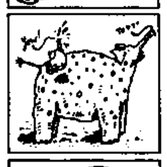


A selection of cartoons, illustrations and animated cels can be found on the **Cartoon Gallery Website**, from **Chris Riddell** to **Steve Bell, Alex** to **Appleby, Honeysett** to **Husband** and **McLachlan** to **Matt.**



The site also has extensive biographies, including **Ronald Searle** and **Kipper Williams** and the **Search by Subject** pages contain **12** categories from **Art** to **Therapy,** showing over **120** original cartoons.

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EYE SAY

IS DEMOCRACY DYING? Does it matter? What is happening? What can we do? www.yes-utopia.com What do you think?

SPEECHWRITING by Britain's leading professional, Mitch Murray – see page 38.

JAMES, Happy 5th wedding anniversary from Trollbag! diatyhidiatyhidiatch ambtchad. Still got it?

EYE DETECT

LINK INVESTIGATIONS. Private and commercial investigators for all areas. Tel: 01306 880707; Fax: 01306 888077. Email: info@linkinvestigations.co.uk Website: www.linkinvestigations.co.uk

EYE LET

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EYE NEED

ABUSED IN ISLINGTON COUNCIL CHILDREN'S HOME. Living in intolerable Council conditions. Have been refused civil liberties. Having panic attacks. Seeks help in starting legal proceedings against Islington Council. Any donations refundable. Would make an interesting story! Reply Box 105637.

TALENTED THEATRE COMPANY with exciting new play needs £1000 to enable launch and reading. Will be an investment for the future. Email launch@thespace.fsworld.co.uk

DAMSEL IN £10K DEBTSTRESS. Would love to be free. Please help me. Lloyds TSB, S/C: 30-99-38. A/C: 00349948. Thank you.

FRIEND OF MERLIN needs funds for survival. S/C: 40-16-08. A/C: 01829130.

AGEING OPERA STAGEHAND, needs help to pay for college course. Many thanks. Bank of Scotland, S/C: 80-02-24. A/C: 00126552.

ANTI-WAR FILM needs legal help and funds to finish. film@softloader.com

HELP! I'm an environmental / peace activist. I have become a postman by mistake. No time for activism anymore. I need money to re-establish myself as a full time activist and play my part. Reply Box 104924.

NEW COMEDY FILM (www.gone2thedogs.com) featuring Tony Booth and Dora Bryan requires a financial investor to complete funding (20K) + gain Executive Producer status + benefits + Company PR in the process. If interested, email info@ralphsltd.co.uk for more details.

YOUNG MAN requires money to go around London. Thank you. Woolwich, S/C: 10-90-02. A/C: 80497517.

ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE STUDENT needs donations towards £60,000 course fees www.kellysibley.net Tel: 07752 653 022.

DEBT CRISIS. Urgently need £30,000 to clear inherited mess. LloydsTSB, S/C: 77-71-43. A/C: 27933968.

MEDICAL STUDENT needs £10,000 to continue studies. Please help. LloydsTSB, S/C: 87-43-51. A/C: 89932060.

LOW PAID, HARD WORKER, has £20K debt: Desperate to get back on track. Have nothing. Please help. Thank you. RBS, S/C: 83-21-08. A/C: 00138982.

SINGLE LADY: hard working but low-paid, desperately seeking £6,000 to learn to fly. Grateful thanks. S/C: 30-90-84. A/C: 00445380. **£25 NEEDED** to recoup this advertisement's cost. S/C: 30-25-80. A/C: 02458950.

PLEASE HELP if you can. Halifax, A/C: 09039520. S/C: 11-18-11.

IN DESPAIR. Unemployed nurse (heart failure) needs 50K to retain home and sanity. Barclays, S/C: 20-27-48. A/C: 50230332.

HELP. Need 16K to meet school fees. Single mum. Worked all of my adult life. Never accepted benefits etc. Sickness has now left me in the lurch. Abbey, S/C: 09-01-26. A/C: 16796851.

OXFORD CLASSICIST, just graduated. Need to clear £11K c.c. bills to pursue studies. No way of paying. PLEASE help. LloydsTSB, S/C: 30-25-80. A/C: 02346362.

AID VOLUNTEER needs £500 for 12 months' accommodation costs. Any help appreciated. Halifax, S/C: 11-07-43. A/C: 00094354.

BUSINESSMAN FLEECED BY EX-BUSINESS PARTNER. Need £10K to get myself back in business and keep my young family safe. Royal Bank of Scotland, S/C: 16-32-21. A/C: 10159363.

34GG NEEDS £3,200 for breast reduction to continue gymnastic career, genuine request. S/C: 10-80-12. A/C: 80377767.

FED UP WITH WHINGERS? Hedonist who loves life guarantees to spend all donations on having a bloody good time. S/C: 11-91-00. A/C: 00459373.

I (WIDOW AND TWO CHILDREN) urgently need cash to prevent loss of family home – £5,600. Any help appreciated: Lloyds Bank, S/C: 30-98-77. A/C: 02175676. Please email me: kulika-subu2000@yahoo.com

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MALE, 38, seeks female for afternoon laughs in posh bars, London West or Central. Reply Box 105984.

NON-NEUTERED TOMCAT (slim, short-dark-haired British mongrel, 33) seeks attentive female owner (20s or 30s) for mutual love. Philosophical purrings and beauty a bonus. housetrainedstraytom @yahoo.co.uk

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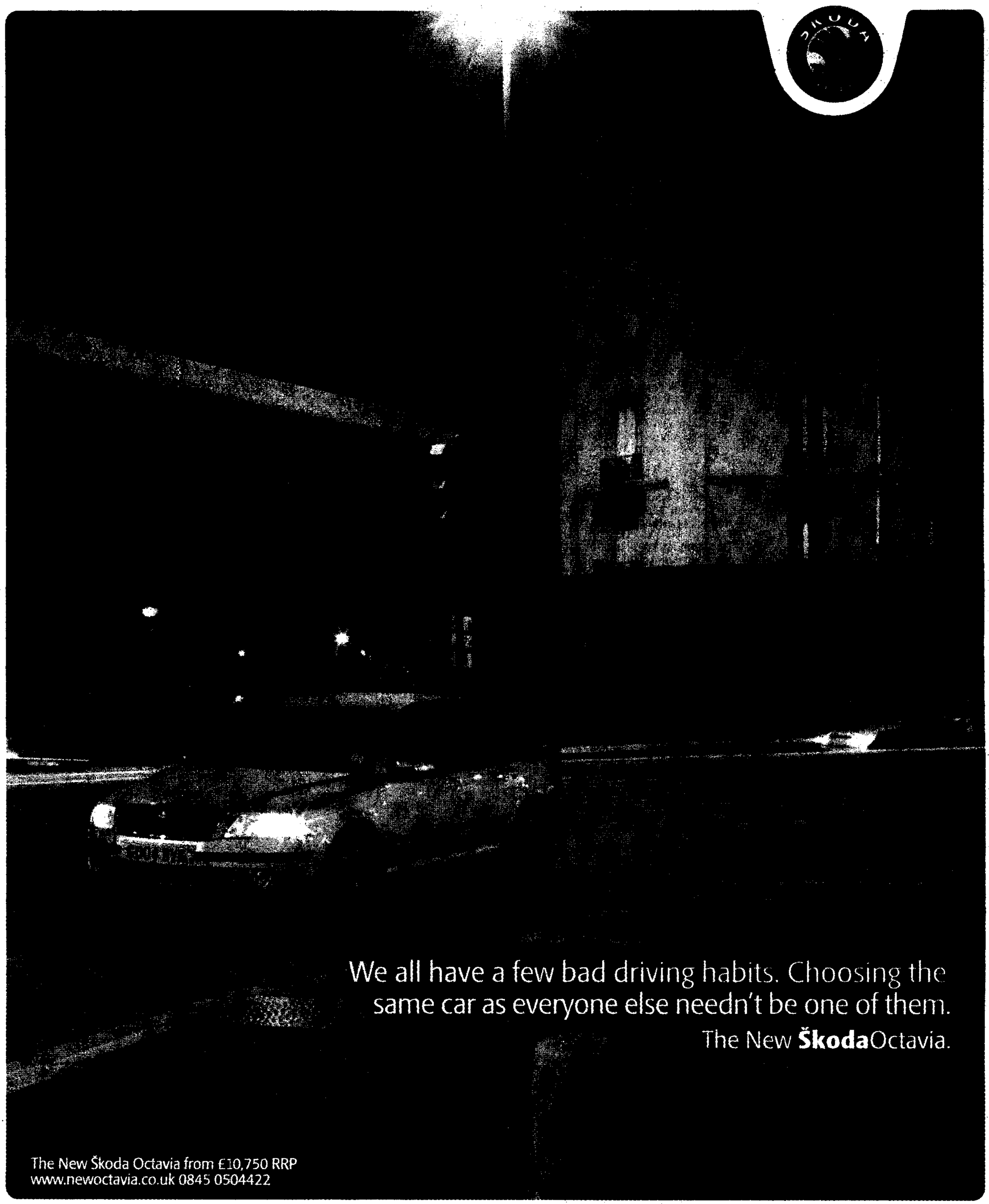
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